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THE DOMESTIC TELEGRAPH.

If any person in the present day were to announce that he purposed making use of a gravity-pump, to pump weight out of himself, and then to project himself, for a few days' shooting, into Africa, he would probably be regarded, by even enthusiasts, as an insane individual. If, however, any person living in 1763 had given notice that he purposed employing a small portion of lightning to carry a message for him from England to Russia, he also would then have been looked upon as a no less deluded maniac.

It is an interesting, and, at the same time, an instructive study, to watch how the impossible gradually becomes the probable, the probable the actual, and, soon after, a thing that everybody knows. When we become familiarised with any great or important discovery, and with its application to everyday-life, we soon forget, or rarely reflect upon the trials and difficulties that truth has invariably to encounter before it takes its place in its new phase as one of the facts of the day.

Even in the present day, when steam and electricity, glass and gunpowder, and many other useful agents are familiar to us all, there are not many amongst us, who, if suddenly transplanted to a colony, or amongst people who were utterly unacquainted with these things, could either clearly explain matters connected with them, or instruct others how to use them.

Steam and its application are not nearly so mysterious to the public generally, however, as is electricity in all its branches. Even to those who have studied the subject all their lives, electricity is still a mystery. We live in an epoch of names, and when we have applied a term to anything, we seem to have described its meaning or attributes; but we are as far as ever from a real knowledge of this force or power, when we state it is called electricity, from *electron*, a Greek word signifying amber, and is produced in various ways, friction being one.

In order, however, to be fully aware how many persons there are who still remain unacquainted with even the simple application of electricity, it is necessary to be in a measure behind the scenes, in which position, we ourselves have had the advantage of hearing very many amusing incidents.

It is not by any means uncommon to find that, some parcel being required in a hurry, a frantic

individual rushes into a telegraph-office, and requests that his parcel may be sent by telegraph immediately. Within the last few days, a gentleman seriously requested a telegraph-clerk to send two dozen stamps to his wife in the country, the stamps being offered and folded up in readiness for transmission. Another person being desirous of sending an anonymous message to a friend, refused to write his message on the paper, because, should he do so, his friend would of course recognise the handwriting. Not long since, we heard a facetious young gentleman inform two or three individuals that the Americans had lately discovered so rapid a means of photographing, as to enable them to photograph the messages as they went along the wire: the information was not only seriously received, but one of the hearers stated that he had read something about it in the papers, and it was called 'Topping the Telegraph.'

When any little incidents of this nature happen, it is not unusual to attribute them to 'old ladies;' but, with one or two exceptions, the most amusing misunderstandings have occurred, not with ancient dames, but with gentlemen in the full bloom of health, and not past the middle age.

One of the many singular facts that are brought to light by the telegraph is, that certain types of minds instinctively connect haste with danger or disaster. It was not many years ago that it was considered dangerous to travel from York to London under two days. The telegraph, then, which is a very hurrying sort of affair, would, we can easily imagine, create a certain amount of alarm from its speed alone; but, in addition to this, it was, when first used, a very expensive way of sending intelligence, and employed therefore only in extreme cases. Hence the public, to a certain extent, have been trained to connect a telegraphic message with sudden illness, accidents, want of a doctor, fires, or some disaster; and, to those whose lives jog on in a slow every-day style, a telegraphic message is so unusual an event, that they are probably correct when they connect a telegraphic message with alarming news. Though the establishment of a London district-telegraph has to some extent done away with these ideas, there yet lingers a large remnant of this alarm, which crops out on many occasions.

Not long since, the District Telegraph Company considered it advisable to send out a few circulars informing the public that they could now procure

one hundred of their stamps for one pound; that a stamp placed on a written message, which might be enclosed in an envelope and sent to the nearest station, would ensure the transmission of their message; thus, that the actual price of a message of fifteen words is rather under twopence-halfpenny. This information was received by many people with pleasure, as they found they could now send their messages at a very economical rate, but others did not accept the information with the same feelings. One gentleman, upon the receipt of the circular, immediately communicated to the company, and remonstrated with them. It appeared that he had a near relation seriously ill, about whom he was very anxious. Upon the receipt of the circular, on the envelope of which was printed 'Telegraph Company,' he was greatly alarmed; so much so, in fact, that he had not been well for several days afterwards, as he of course imagined that his friend must be dead, in consequence of his receiving something from a telegraph-office. It was suggested to this alarmist that the message might have been to announce that his friend was better, but he adhered to the old proverb that only 'ill news flies apace,' and that the company ought not to have caused him groundless alarm.

This feeling of alarm is very widely spread, in spite of the frequency of domestic messages. For example, a gentleman having met an old friend in London, telegraphed to his faithful spouse to the effect that he should bring this friend home to dinner at six. This simple announcement he believed would be a sufficient hint that something extra should be provided. Alas! there was nothing besides the usual family dinner, the fatted calf had not been slain.

'Why, my dear, did you not receive my telegram, saying I was going to bring him home to dinner?'

'Thank Heaven, my dear,' replied his wife, 'my alarm is over. I did receive a dreadful telegraph; but I was so frightened I dared not open it, and there it is on the mantel-piece. I thought you must be killed, or run over, or something, and I've been more dead than alive ever since.'

These, and several other similar instances, come almost weekly under the notice of those officially connected with this much-dreaded but very useful power. The district-telegraph is decidedly the most domestic of its class; the fact that it is principally established for the purpose of conveying messages twelve miles round London, enables men of business in town to communicate easily with their families, and their families with them; and should these parties be within a reasonable distance of an office, the cost of the message will be at most sixpence, and if stamps be used, only twopence-halfpenny.

We will now trace the course of a telegraphic message, from its first production at the hands of the sender, to its final delivery to the receiver.

First, we must offer a few remarks upon the selection and omission of words in a message—fifteen words, excluding address, are allowed; and it is of course desirable to convey as much information as is possible in these fifteen words. A person not accustomed to send messages should first write down what he means to say, and then recast his sentence so that he may express the same sense in fewer words. Here, for example, is a message that a friend once sent to us: 'Will you meet us to-night at eight o'clock, at the chief entrance of the Lyceum; we have front-seats in the boxes for four.' Here were twenty-five words used to convey an intimation which might have been done in fourteen, for the message, as follows, contains the same sense: 'Please meet us at eight, chief entrance Lyceum, we have four front-box seats.'

In a telegraph message, a certain amount is left to the common-sense of the receiver—as in the above, no sensible person would go the Lyceum at 8 A.M. in order to witness a performance; the 'to-night' is

likewise unnecessary, for unless it had been 'to-night,' a telegraphic message would have been out of place; and so in many other cases, brevity may be adopted with advantage. The writing cannot be too plain and distinct, a school-boy sort of hand being preferable. There are some ever-recurring mistakes in connection with the art of telegraphing, quite independent of mistakes from bad writing, so that it is a sender's interest to make his part of the performance as intelligible as possible.

As soon as a message is written and given to a clerk, the document is read over, and placed in front of an instrument. The clerk then 'calls' a station, usually that at Cannon Street; and this calling consists of some special movement of the needles, which is always the same for the same station; upon the called station answering, the message is commenced. Each letter composing the words is indicated by a particular series of movements of the needles, which movements are caused by an electric current sent from the first station. This current of electricity is the result of a movement of two handles made at the instrument by the clerk. The current traverses the wire instantaneously; and as it passes through a portion of wire at the other station, it converts this into a powerful temporary magnet, which therefore attracts the needle temporarily, each movement of the handle at the first station causing a movement in the needle of the second. Now, it is by these movements of the needles that the clerks read off the messages; so that the fears of the gentleman, who did not wish his handwriting to be recognised by his friend to whom he telegraphed, were groundless, his words being converted into a fluid state, and again reconstructed in the ink-and-paper form at the other end of the wire.

Should the message be from one out-station to another, the clerk at Cannon Street copies the message, and delivers it into the hands of the person who works the particular instrument to which the office for which the message is intended is connected. The clerk there again copies the message, and delivers it to a boy, who carries it to its final destination. A copy of this message is retained at Cannon Street for about three or four months, after which it is destroyed.

The clerks employed at this work are almost all females, there being upwards of one hundred and twenty young girls obtaining a livelihood as telegraph-clerks. They receive, on an average, about ten shillings per week; and, as the whole of their time is rarely employed in telegraphing, they are enabled, in addition, to use their own needles, whilst in readiness to read the needles of the telegraph instrument. The hours of work are from 9 o'clock A.M. to 7 o'clock P.M., a tolerably long spell, supposing they were employed all the time in reading the vagaries of the magnetic needle, or in sending messages; but, as intervals of rest are of frequent occurrence, the labour is comparatively light, and of a more attractive kind than mere sewing for a living.

It might be imagined that when messages of all classes are being sent by the aid of a number of young girls, that there was very little chance of a message being private or not divulged, but there are one or two reasons why the public are very sufficiently protected in this respect. In the first place, a telegraph-clerk becomes a kind of automaton; and, in consequence of day after day sending off some half-dozen score of messages, no particular one is likely to impress itself on the memory and be there retained. In addition to this natural cause, it is a part of the service agreement that no clerk divulges the purport of any message; and an act of parliament was passed during last session, rendering any person liable to a penalty of twenty pounds, who delayed or divulged a telegraphic message. Thus, in this respect, the public are well protected.

There are now two systems of communicating in almost general use, the first is by the aid of a single needle, the Morse alphabet being in almost universal use. This enables a clerk, independent of his nationality or knowledge of language, to read off the letters from his instruments, so that an English clerk in London might send an English message to Russia, which would be read off by a Russian, and written in English. In like manner, an English girl would be able to read off a message sent in the Russian language, with the same ease that she could one in English. Thus there is a universal language in telegraphing as there is in music.

The other method of communicating is by printing, the various letters being indicated by a series of dots and dashes. From the time of first commencing to study the instrument until proficiency is obtained in reading and sending, two months usually elapse—shorter or longer, according to the talent of the clerk. A clerk is generally able to send a message before she can read one; it is also found much more easy to read the messages sent by one clerk than those by another.

At the present time there are about two hundred and fifty miles of wire, set up on the house-tops and underground, for the use of the London and twelve-miles-round telegraph; by the aid of these and the eighty-three stations now open, it would be possible to send about one thousand messages per hour—a quantity sufficient to render the district telegraph a very paying investment. At the present time, however, the number per day, on an average throughout the year, does not exceed one thousand, so that only one-tenth of the work that might be done is actually accomplished.

Some curious statistics are brought to our notice when we examine the causes that influence the number of telegraphic messages. A very fine morning followed by continued rain from mid-day, is at once a source of business to the telegraph company. Numberless appointments that had been agreed on when the weather was fine, have to be put off. Gentlemen who purposed walking home from the station, would now prefer their brougham, or their water-proofs, or something to protect them from the weather. The friend who was coming to dine with them will select another day, and this naturally leads to a second message from the disappointed host to his faithful spouse. A very wet morning sometimes causes several extra messages, for the prudent will, at the last moment, sometimes change their raiment in order that they may have nothing on that will spoil, and their keys, unfortunately, are left in those garments which had been cast off, so that a message is sent to have the keys forwarded by next train.

It is in messages of this kind where the electric telegraph is of immense use, and where any delay at once produces serious inconvenience. It would be of little use to a business-man to have his keys forwarded by a 3 P.M. train, when he wished for them by one arriving at 11 A.M., and yet, perhaps, half an hour's delay on the part of a clerk, or the boy who delivered the message, might produce nearly as great a difference as this on lines where only a few trains run.

When, again, any information has been forgotten, and is required immediately, this district telegraph is very serviceable. On one occasion we went to London, and had an engagement somewhere near Holborn, but the actual address we had left on our dining-room mantel-piece. Telegraphing from London Bridge, we directed the message to be sent to the office at Charing Cross, and we then proceeded by boat to Hungerford. Upon reaching Charing Cross we entered the telegraph-office, and, on inquiring, were presented with the message just arrived, and containing the name of the locality where we were to keep our appointment.

The greatest number of messages ever sent in one day by the London district telegraphs, was on the day previous to the Princess of Wales entering London, no less than fifteen hundred having been received and sent on that occasion: the principal purport of these messages was the engaging of seats and friends, the announcement of disappointments or of expectations—in fact, an endless variety of anxious, eager lines, all with reference to the event of the morrow. On all great public occasions, work is brought in to the telegraph, so that the meeting of parliament, the Derby-day, &c., are days of extra work.

In an upstairs room of the office in Cannon Street there is a kind of cupboard, upon opening the doors of which a mass of wires and screws, bolts and fastenings, are exposed to view; these are all lettered or numbered, and a strange mystery exists with regard to them; they are really the junctions between various station-wires, and thus two extreme stations might at once be placed in connection with each other. We will suppose that B represents the termination of the wires that lead from Blackheath to Cannon Street, by which wires the messages are sent, and C the termination of the Camden Town wires. Now, B and C might be a yard apart in the cupboard, and it would merely be necessary to join these two by means of a wire, in order to allow Camden Town to talk to Blackheath, or vice versa.

A wonderful medley of messages might be read by any curious individual who placed an instrument in any circuit, as it is called, for his needle would move in accordance with the needle at the end of the wire, and thus the message would be read off.

Some singular and amusing mistakes sometimes occur in connection with telegraphing, in consequence of the misreading of a word or letter—the signals for some few words being very similar—that is, the movements of the needles to indicate one word are very like those which indicate another with a very different meaning. A household in the country were rather surprised at receiving a message from the lord and master, to the effect that he wanted his wig to be at the London Bridge station by four o'clock P.M. As the gentleman had a very excellent crop of natural hair, of course the family were somewhat perplexed; for 'wig' read 'wife,' and the message was intelligible. A gentleman telegraphs to his friend to the following effect: 'I want you to get me this evening at any place you may appoint;' for 'get,' read 'meet.' A cautious spouse sent a message to his wife, who received the following: 'I am going to bring some hog home for dinner to-night—be ready.' The wife, probably expecting a large piece of pork, did not prepare much for dinner, and is consequently very much surprised when her husband returns, and brings with him a very old friend, who is very unlike a 'hog.' The words 'hog' and 'one' were unluckily very much alike, and were mistaken the one for the other.—'Bring some one home for dinner,' was very intelligible.

Considering the number of messages per diem, and the imperfect manner in which addresses are often given, and the badness of the senders' writing, there are remarkably few mistakes.

Occasionally, when the wires are very close together, the rain will bring two wires into contact; then the messages which ought to go in one direction run away with the words and deliver them in quite another place. Thus, a short time ago, some large tea-agents were much puzzled by receiving perpetual inquiries about cargoes of beef.—'How about the beef?' was an oft-repeated question. Some shipping-agents, whose private wires ran down the same line, were equally puzzled at having repeated demands for another chest of unmixed tea. It was very shortly found that the wires had been brought into contact by wind and rain, and thus the message for one firm

had flown off at a tangent, and had made its way in a wrong direction.

It is not at all an unusual circumstance to find that certain unscrupulous persons are on the watch to obtain money from telegraph companies, on the plea of losses sustained in consequence of mistakes. Such an attempt was made a short time since. A gentleman having sent a message up to his office in London saying that he was not well enough to attend business on that day, omitted in his address to say that there were two streets of the same name close together. The boy who had to deliver the message went to the wrong street, and upon looking for the house indicated by the number on the telegraph direction, found that the house was in ruins, and men at work amongst the debris. Having given the information at his office that the house was in ruins, the intimation was forwarded to the sender of the message that, the house being in ruins, the message could not be delivered. Here, then, was a real grievance, a decided case for compensation, for the gentleman, upon hearing the alarming intelligence that his town-house was in ruins, was taken so seriously ill that it was at first feared he would not recover. A messenger was immediately despatched to London to inquire into the cause of the house being in ruins. Thus much expense was incurred, and serious loss in consequence of the illness produced by alarm; and therefore the District Telegraph Company ought to fully compensate the gentleman, or he would be compelled, however much against his feelings, &c., &c. But such little matters had been tried on before by other injured individuals, and the gentleman did not receive any pecuniary recompense.

Lightning sometimes produces a temporary stoppage in telegraphing, as the natural electric fluid demagnetises the needles, and therefore renders them temporarily useless. During the severe storm in September 1863, no less than fifteen stations belonging to the London District Company were rendered temporarily useless by the lightning. In no instance have we ever heard of a clerk being damaged by the electric fluid, although in one case a clerk received a shock. He happened to be standing on a damp floor, and was holding the handles of the instrument very firmly; a storm passing over his circuit gave him a slight shock, which, however, did little more than alarm him.

It is not an uncommon thing to hear of birds being killed by the wires of an electric telegraph, and people unacquainted with the principle of telegraphs not unfrequently imagine that it is the electricity that kills them; this, however, is not the case. If a bird were to become very wet, were then to hold on to the wires with its feet, and stick its beak into the ground, it would then probably receive a slight shock, but birds are not naturally given to practise this experiment. The way by which birds become killed is by flying against the wires by night, and thus striking themselves, become either killed or seriously damaged. So frequently does this occur, that in one large game district a gentleman preferred laying down wires in another place at his own expense, rather than have them going over his land near his preserves.

One of the many advantages derived from our familiarity with the telegraph is the arrangement of all the clocks on railways and in London to Greenwich mean time. When the ball drops at one o'clock at Greenwich, a signal is sent to Cannon Street, and the clock there being thus regulated for Greenwich time, a signal can be sent to all out-stations, or to any private establishments where a knowledge of correct time is of importance.

The majority of our readers have probably heard the singularly melancholy noise that is sometimes made by the wind blowing against the wires that are suspended against the telegraph-posts. It has been asserted by some individuals, that, when the

noise is greatest, rain is sure to fall very shortly; but as the quantity of the noise must in a great measure depend on the direction and strength of the wind, we are bound to deny the accuracy of this assertion as a general rule.

We before mentioned, that the majority of persons were not well acquainted with either the principles or practice of telegraphing, and that hence some very amusing mistakes sometimes occurred. We will conclude this article with one, for the accuracy of which we can vouch.

An old lady (this time) had given permission for some wires to be placed on her house, where they were supported by a pole. After these had been in position some few weeks, the old lady waited upon the principal telegraph authority, and stated that she had a complaint to make. 'The fact is, sir,' she said, 'them telegraph messages won't allow me to get any sleep at a night; I lays awake, a-tossing about, and can't get a wink for the noise. At first, sir, I didn't mind it as much, and things were not as bad as they are now; but lately, sir, there have been a deal more messages. I don't think either, sir, that you are aware of all that's said along them wires; there's much that hadn't ought to be; for I can assure you, sir, that very much that's said there—and I have to lay and listen to—no respectable woman ought to hear. So I've come at last to complain to you, sir, hoping that it may be stopped.'

The gentleman to whom this singular complaint was made was of course aware that the noise complained of was the wind in the wires; the messages of a doubtful character were the emanations of a fruitful imagination on the part of the old lady. He, however, pacified her by stating that, in future, young women of great respectability were to be substituted at the offices for the young men who formerly worked there, after which he received no additional complaints from the wakeful and imaginative old dame.

RUTH MORRISON.

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART IV.—CHAPTER IX.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR stood at Mrs McGrath's bright cheerful fire, lifting up first one foot, and then another to the blaze. 'You know what comfort means, Mrs McGrath. I wonder,' said he laughing, 'you don't get some one to share it with you.'

'O captain, for shame,' rejoined the widow, smirking and looking down.

'Now, what do you say to Marks, for instance?' he continued, with a quizzical smile.

'Tut, nonsense, sir,' she replied half angrily. 'But, captain, speaking of Marks, I'm sorry to hear of all the work they had above yesterday.'

'What work?' returned the other quickly.

'Why, sure enough, I forgot; I suppose you don't know; but there can be no harm now in my speaking of what's in everybody's mouth. The first I heard of the business was from Tom Reynolds the policeman, him who was up at Oaklands to see into it; and Marks was just telling me all, when we heard the car coming; but I don't know; my mind misgives me about that fellow. Tom Reynolds didn't think so bad of her, some way.'

Captain Sinclair listened in astonishment to these unconnected and unintelligible fragments. 'Why, in Heaven's name, what is it all about?' he impatiently asked. 'I know no more than the man in the moon what you are talking of. A policeman up at Oaklands—what the mischief was that about?'

'Bless us, captain, but you take one quite aback; you put me in a flutter, you speak so short. Sure 'tis Miss Morrison that stole a lot of things, and Tom Reynolds was up with a warrant; and they found them all in her trunk; and so they sent her off this

morning. Mind,' added the widow, correcting herself, 'I don't tell you she stole the things; but them as knows best, I suppose, says it; and proof is proof, as Marks was just after stating; and there's how it is.'

'Miss Morrison stole!' repeated Captain Sinclair slowly, and opening his eyes wide in sheer amazement. 'She as much stole as I did. And do you mean to tell me that they sent her off from Oaklands, my poor child! Where did she go to, Mrs M'Grath?' he asked fiercely, stamping his foot.

'Lord, captain, how on earth can I tell? They sent her to Newry this morning, that's all I know; but indeed, Marks said,' added Mrs M'Grath, with that spirit of contradiction so rife in woman, for at heart she thought Ruth innocent, 'Marks said that there the things all were, in the very bottom of her box: rings and jewels, and I don't know what else, belonging to the mistress; and sure, that's plain anyhow—leastways, Marks says so.'

'Marks be —,' returned Captain Sinclair furiously. Now the captain was never given to swearing; but no question about it, he rattled out a tremendous oath then and there, that we can't by any means chronicle in these pages. 'The confounded impudence of them all!' he continued. 'Policemen ransacking my house, and people sent off bag and baggage in my absence, and I knowing nothing about it! 'Tis enough to drive one stark mad. Here, give me these things; and he seized the small box, and flinging his coat over his arm, strode out of the house, without even saying good-night to Mrs M'Grath.

'Well, if I ever!' exclaimed that dame, looking after the retreating form of the captain, as it vanished down the road. 'What a dazed woman I was to go and open my lips at all about any of their works. Bad ces to them! Marks, and that governess, and the whole lot. One would think 'twas I had the doing of it, so hot and heavy did the man come down upon me!' And she slammed to the door of her establishment with a bang, and went to wreak her wrath upon the kitchen-maid.

It would have been no easy task to keep pace with Captain Sinclair as he dashed out from the Golden Sheaf, and plunged along regardless of the mud that went splashing all over him at every step. He muttered each moment dire anathemas against all his household, scarcely excepting his wife; he gnashed his teeth with indignation as he thought of Mrs Montserrat, concluding at once that she had influenced her mistress to act thus rashly and hastily. 'Twas some hellish plot,' he muttered, 'concocted the moment my back was turned. I'll have that French harridan off before the morning light, as sure as my name's Sinclair. That poor, gentle little thing! God knows what may happen to her.' He pushed open the small gate leading in from the road to his own demesne. 'Stop!' said he to himself. 'It might be well if I went round and saw this policeman, Reynolds, first, and got from him all the bearings of the case. I remember Mrs M'Grath said he didn't suspect her, or something of the sort. True, though, the fellow Marks told me the front gate might be locked.' And he stood for a second or two irresolute, with his hand on the half-open wicket. A cold sighing wind swept over the waters of the lake, and shook the naked branches of the trees, and came like the ominous whisper of impending danger to his ear. The captain shivered where he stood. 'What a weird sound that wind has to-night! Yes, I will see Reynolds. Sure, I can climb the gate.' And he swung to the little wicket, and again strode on up the road; for the police barrack was at the other side of, and not far from the front avenue. On how trivial a thing do the greatest events revolve! The captain plunged his way through mud and gloom to the police barrack; and the lurking assassin, as he changed his uncomfortable posture behind the old oak, wondered what could be keeping the master so long.

We must briefly retrace our steps, and return to where we left the heroine of our narrative, unconscious, on the floor of the room in the Downshire Arms at Lisburn. The sound of her fall, as well as the previous cry, quickly brought in some of the servants of the hotel to poor Ruth. She was lifted gently into an easy-chair; the window was thrown open; restoratives—such as smelling-salts, water, and wine—were all successively brought and applied; but when the deathlike pallor still continued, and no symptoms of returning animation appeared, the landlord and his daughter, who had both come in at the first note of alarm, began to get extremely uneasy, apprehensive that life itself was extinct. 'Where did she come from?' 'Who is she?' were questions whispered round from one to another.

'No matter who she is,' exclaimed the man; 'we mustn't let a fellow-creature die this way on our hands without help;' and he bustled out, announcing his intention of going off himself for the nearest doctor. At the door, he met a gentleman who had come to the house in the morning. 'A stranger lady taken very bad, sir,' he said, 'in there,' pointing to the room. 'Don't know what's amiss. I'm hurrying for the doctor; for, I own to you, I fear she's dead.'

The gentleman addressed passed quickly into the apartment to see if he could render any assistance. They were, at the instant, wheeling the arm-chair close to the open window, to try and get more air in upon the fainting form, and so the young man entering did not at once see who it was. He went round in the rear of the frightened group that were gathered about the sufferer; and being taller than most of them, soon caught a glimpse of the livid countenance. As he did so, an expression of horror and astonishment broke from his lips. 'Make way there, for God's sake,' he cried, 'and don't press so close round that chair—you'll smother her.' He pushed them all wildly back, and flung himself on his knees beside the insensible figure, seizing her hand; while with eyes fixed in trembling apprehension, he gazed into her face, and his own became almost as white, with the unutterable dread that this stony stillness was death itself. He laid his finger on the pulse, and it felt like the feeble vibration of a slender thread. 'Quick, bring some brandy here,' he called out hoarsely; and with a spoon, he succeeded in getting a few drops within her lips. 'Ruth, my own beloved,' he whispered softly; and like an electric touch, the low sound of that loved voice sent the flush again to the cheek, and the eyelids were lifted, and she made a faint effort to speak, although the words were inaudible. When the doctor came, he sent every one but Ferdinand—for we need scarcely say 'twas he—and the landlord's daughter from the room, and continued giving the brandy in small portions, which, before very long, restored the lost animation. Ferdinand continued holding her hand, and watching tearfully the ravages that anxiety and sorrow had wrought in her face, and wondering, in miserable perplexity, what had caused it all. The doctor tried to hinder her from speaking; but immediately after consciousness had been fully restored, she whispered to him, for she could speak no louder: 'I must speak at once to this gentleman; it is a matter of the last importance.' The physician accordingly withdrew.

When left alone with Ferdinand, Ruth explained to him rapidly and succinctly the terrible position in which Captain Sinclair was placed. It seemed as if the fainting-fit had restored something of collected calmness to her disordered mind; for she could not, with greater clearness, have imparted to the astonished young man all that was needful for him to know. It was only when the doubt arose as to there being time to retrieve the error of not having taken some precautionary measures in Newry, that her mind again became confused and restless. Ferdinand, however,

more uneasy than he cared to let Ruth perceive, taking out his watch, assured her that 'he had lots of time'—that he'd have a chaise and pair at once, and easily overtake Captain Sinclair before he could by any possibility reach Common Cross—the place, as Ruth indicated, at which he was to arrive by the mail-car, and from the moment of his leaving which the extreme peril began. 'I ought, I see now,' she murmured, throwing down her feeble hands despairingly, 'to have hid myself somewhere about there, and met him when he came; but it never once occurred to me—never once.'

Ferdinand, telling her again and again that all would be right, had a power that none else possessed to impart to her quiet and strength. He repaired instantly to the landlord, desiring him to have a chaise and pair got, as rapidly as possible, to go first to Banbridge, and thence to pursue the mail-car. He then called his uncle, the elderly gentleman who was with him at the hotel; and telling him, in few words, exactly how matters were, brought him in, and introduced him to Ruth, when the affectionate fatherly manner, and tender commiserating face with which the old gentleman bent over her, brought balm to her spirit. 'Uncle will take care of you, darling, until I return,' he whispered to her; 'and fear nothing: trust in One above, Who is "the helper of the friendless;" and I'll be back soon to you with good news.' And so he tore himself away; for though he scarcely dared to admit it to himself, he grew sick at heart as he felt how little time was before him, and calculated the distance to be traversed. Ruth was able to stand, leaning on old Mr Munroe's arm, and to smile a faint yet hopeful return to Ferdinand's eager farewell, as he gazed at her from the window of the carriage.

It was some time before quiet was restored to the Downshire Arms, so great had been the commotion and excitement. The doctor returned on Ferdinand's departure, and found his patient so much better, that he contented himself with ordering her perfect rest, with some simple nourishment, and desiring that she should retire very early for the night. Mr Munroe followed him into the hall, and slipped the fee into his open palm. He made a feint of declining, asking, in a dubious manner, who she was, and what were her circumstances.

'My dear sir,' responded the old gentleman, 'I'm her uncle—I'm her uncle.'

'Oh, thank you, sir,' rejoined the doctor. 'I shall call in the morning.'

'It isn't a lie,' observed Mr Munroe to himself, as he returned to the sitting-room; 'for sure she will be my niece very shortly, please God; and a dear nice little thing she is too—only I hope she's not delicate. I wouldn't like a sickly wife for Ferdy.'

It was a peaceful, pleasant evening that Ruth passed with the kind old man in that hotel at Lisburn. He explained to her how he lived at the other side of Belfast; that his nephew had joined him but the day before, on his return from France; that some business of his own had brought them to Lisburn, not an hour previous to Ruth's arrival; and that Ferdinand was to have gone on the next day to see her at Captain Sinclair's. Then Ruth narrated to him, as she lay back in her chair, all she had gone through at Oaklands, which so excited and irritated her listener, that he had frequently to rise and walk at a rapid pace up and down the room.

'Bless my soul and body!' he gasped out; 'I never heard such a thing in all my life—I never heard such a thing. Poor creature! I wonder that you are alive after it all. Let me see—I forget—if that dreadful house, Oaklands, I think you call it, is in Down or Armagh.'

'Down, I think,' said Ruth.

'Oh, then they'll be hanged in Downpatrick.'

Yes; and I'll walk, my dear young lady— Stop! I'll call you Ruth. Why shouldn't I?

'O do!' said Ruth earnestly.

'Well, Ruth, I'll walk, God willing, in my stocking-vamps, to Downpatrick to see the execution; I will, as sure as ever my name is Cecil Munroe. Heaven grant that Ferdy will be in time, and that they'll be caught; and he flung open the shutters to look out. 'I'd hang that Mrs Sinclair, too, as an accessory before the fact; I would, upon my honour; and 'twould be a great god-send to that good old soul the captain to get quit of her in that way.'

The night was fast falling ere Ferdinand Munroe reached Banbridge, and it was scarcely necessary to ask after the mail-car; it had long gone, as he had feared. Some short time was necessarily spent in instituting minute inquiries about the cross-roads through the country, for both driver and traveller were ignorant of the route. Having received as explicit directions as possible, and the horses being recruited with meal and water, they set out anew. The evening was gloomy, and they had not proceeded many miles before the road became so rough and bad that they had to advance slowly and with care, and in a few minutes came to a dead halt.

'What is the meaning of this?' shouted out Ferdinand.

'Why, sir, I fear we took a wrong turn below there; for hang me if I think we can make way here at all; and he bent over the horses' heads in a fruitless effort to see sufficiently far to judge if there was any outlet.

'Heavens and earth!' cried Ferdinand, bounding from the vehicle. 'What do you mean by going astray in this manner? I tell you, 'tis a matter of life and death.'

'Be gorra, I can't help it,' answered the postilion sulkily. 'I didn't come down here a-purpose, and how to get out of it now,' he exclaimed, 'sorra one of me knows.'

However, bad as things seemed, by literally as well as metaphorically putting the shoulder to the wheel, Ferdinand and the man between them succeeded in extricating chaise and horses from their awkward position, though with considerable loss of time. The remainder of the drive was passed by the young man in a state of mind little short of distraction; he could not stay an instant quiet, and half resolved, more than once, to leap out, and run ahead, as he thought that his tingling feet would far outstrip even the rapid rate at which the carriage now rolled along. At length the carriage drew up so suddenly that the horses were thrown upon their haunches, and the fidgety inmate sent with violence against the front window. 'Holloa! what's this?' he called out. 'Is this it?'

Without replying, the postilion shouted, in a voice that instantly brought Mrs M'Grath to the door: 'Any one inside there? Be this Common Cross?'

'Yes,' replied the woman, 'it is; and very good board and lodging, though I say it, any gentleman can have here, at the Golden Sheaf.'

Ferdinand had already sprung from the carriage. 'Woman,' asked he with excited eagerness, 'has Captain Sinclair been here yet?'

'Captain Sinclair!' repeated the other in surprise. 'Yes, to be sure, he's been here, and in there warming himself; and is gone—no, not three minutes since—up home, to Oaklands.'

'Which way did he go? For God's sake, woman, tell me quick!'

'Oh, just down the road there,' returned Mrs M'Grath, considerably startled at the abrupt and fiery earnestness of her interlocutor.

'Down this road?' he inquired, pointing with his finger. 'Straight on, is it?'

'Yes, sir, yes; and she added, calling out after him as he darted forwards, not waiting for another

word: 'You go in the little wicket-gate at the left-hand side of the road, not two hundred yards before you—if it is for Oaklands you're bound.'

'Yes, yes, I remember,' and he recalled what Ruth had said to him about that side-entrance, and the walk on by the lake, gasping out as he did so: 'If it's so near, I'll never catch him in time.'

'Mercies be around me!' exclaimed Mrs M'Grath, turning to the postilion, who was busying himself unharnessing the horses; 'tis well if I don't go clean crazed this blessed night. If that ben't a fiery spark, I never saw one. What's it all about?' she asked.

'Faix, missis, that's more nor I know; but sich a fierce young blade I never kim across. Lord! 'tis a blessing he didn't crack my skull upon the road; and look here,' he continued, taking the light from Mrs M'Grath, and holding it up to the reeking sides of the panting steeds; 'sich a lather of sweat. 'Twill be the small-hours of the morning afore I have them dry and done.'

'I'll send Jim out to help you,' said the hostess. 'But when have you to be for the road again? Is he going back, and how far did you come—the whole way from Belfast, I suppose?'

'No, we kim only from Lisburn. But my word for it, it'll be a good stretch of the day afore I put these poor divils under harness again, I can tell you, to say nothing of myself; I never had sich a hard drive in all my born days.—What's that?' said the man, suddenly stopping in his talk, and in the unharnessing operations that he had resumed.

'Tis a shot,' cried Mrs M'Grath nervously, pausing a moment after they had listened to the clear, sharp-ringing sound that broke upon the dull stillness of the night, with its returning echo answering back from the distant hill.

'Have you poachers hereabouts?' asked the postilion.

'I don't know: it sounded as if it was somewhere about Oaklands. God grant that young man you brought isn't after mischief.'

'Not he,' rejoined the other.

'Well, I suppose it is some of these poaching chaps; I heard the police over there talking of them. I'll send Jim out to you now,' added Mrs M'Grath, as she turned into the house; 'and I'll have something hot and comfortable for you by the time I think you'll be ready.'

'Thank you, missis; 'twas never more welcome, or more needed.'

CHAPTER X.

When Ferdinand Munroe hurried off so quickly from the Golden Sheaf, he had not gone many yards before he found himself at fault. The road was altogether strange; the flare of the light at Mrs M'Grath's door was still in his eyes, and the night itself was dark; at least, the thick clouds that drifted through the sky effectually dimmed what little light the moon in its first quarter might have shed. He had therefore to slacken his pace a little; but keeping close to the wall on his left, he soon came upon the small gate.

'This is it,' he said, flinging it open, and in his impatient haste, not knowing the nature or length of the walk, and careless of everything but getting up to Captain Sinclair (who, he concluded, was on before him) ere he could reach the spot where the attempt on his life was to be made, he dashed forwards at full speed. It was only as he came where the path wound away among the trees, and when a faint gleam from the heavens disclosed to him the still sheet of water almost at his side, that he stopped in some uncertainty. 'Why, this must be the very place,' he said; but the thought had scarcely flashed upon him, ere he heard a slight rustle in the grass on his right; nor had he well

turned in that direction, when a shot was fired, and the ball whizzed so close that it grazed his ear. Ferdinand rushed in towards the trees, and in a second he and Marks, who plunged forwards as he discharged the pistol, were grappling with one another in a fierce and deadly encounter. Ferdinand was lithe, strong, and active; yet Marks, though much older, was a powerfully-built man, and now had the strength of desperation added to his natural vigour. At first, he thought it was Captain Sinclair, but he was not more than a moment engaged in the conflict before he found his mistake. No matter, it was now with him equally a struggle for life. Mark's antagonist had at the outset grasped the wrist of the hand that held the pistol, for he rightly imagined that there might be yet an undischarged barrel; and he retained his vice-like hold, in spite of the desperate efforts of the other to disengage it. Each tried to throw his opponent, but for a considerable time without success; the younger and sligher man had literally twined himself round the grosser form of his foe, and half-a-dozen times, or more, they had wheeled round and round, on the grass, and upon the walk, panting, struggling, until at length a slip upon the trampled sward brought them down, when both rolled heavily to the ground. Then upon the earth the wrestling combat was continued with unabated fury, each endeavouring to get above the other. It is hard to know how long the silent struggle (for not a word had been uttered) might have endured, had not Marks, by a dexterous feint of yielding, got a momentary advantage; rising above Ferdinand's prostrate form, and pressing with his knees and full weight upon the young man's chest, he caused the grasp upon his wrist to palpably relax, and breaking the silence with the ominous words: 'Whoever you be, if you know a prayer, say it now, my fine fellow,' he bent round the hand that was still clutched, but feebly by the unfortunate youth, so as to bring the barrel of the pistol directly on a line with the head that lay pressed deeply into the grass, with all its brown curls drooping upon the forehead. One low cry broke from him, a cry of intense suffering, as the violent pressure upon the chest was augmented, and Ruth's name fluttered to the lips that were parted in gasping anguish, as he felt that all was now over for him upon earth. The finger of the assassin was touching the trigger, and Ferdinand's doom hung upon a second, when another figure that had been forcing its way, unheard and unnoticed by the combatants, through trees and branches, emerged from the grove upon the walk; and the loud, quick, familiar voice, with its 'Hollos! what's all this?' so disconcerted Marks, that he bounded up from his vanquished enemy, and retreating several paces, stood, pistol in hand, gazing upon the unlooked-for apparition of his master. Ferdinand, when released from the incubus that for the last few seconds had nearly crushed him, sprang to his feet, and, staggering from giddiness and still impeded respiration, cried out, in hardly articulate words: 'Seize him, seize him, the murderous scoundrel!'—making a forward movement to where the butler stood at bay. Marks, with a wild imprecation of baffled rage, fired off the second barrel of the pistol at random, and turned to flee; it was too dark, and he was too confused to notice that the lake at that spot expanded with a slight curve into the land; and some long tangled grass and weeds catching his feet, he plunged headlong and heavily in, while one terrific cry, cleaving the very air, rose from him, as the waters closed over his descending form. Ferdinand tottered and fell to the ground, as it happened, at the instant the pistol had been fired—and Captain Sinclair, in the utmost consternation, hurried to him, certain that he had been hit, if not shot dead. He had no idea who it was that he was bending over, nor the remotest notion of what had led to the strange encounter in his own grounds.

Marks, he had in the dim light recognised, and by his firing at himself, conjectured that it was murder he contemplated; that last appalling cry, with the splash into the water, he had too, of course, heard; but all his attention was devoted to one who, he feared, had been shot down by the assassin's hand, and who, he saw, was a gentleman, though he did not yet discover him to be a friend. No very long time elapsed, however, before Ferdinand recovered, and the captain had the happiness of being assured from his own lips that nothing material was the matter. He was only giddy, and 'bothered,' he said, 'from the weight of that ruffian, who had almost done for him;' but no ball had touched him, and he again rose to his feet, assisted by Captain Sinclair.

'I know your voice,' said the latter; 'but I can't see your face well enough in this light to recognise you.'

'Ferdinand Munroe. Don't you remember?'

'To be sure I do,' and he warmly grasped his hand.

'But where did that fellow go to?' inquired Ferdinand eagerly.

'He's gone, I fear, already to his great account;' and they both hurried forward to the water's edge. The lake was still and quiet now, and spoke not of the guilty wretch whose body lay motionless in the slime below, save by the yet uneasy swell with which the disturbed element rippled against the sedgy margin, as though inquiring who it might be that had sought repose in its cold recesses.

'Human aid cannot reach the miserable man,' said Captain Sinclair. 'Under any circumstances, it would be impossible to extricate him in this light, and without any appliances at hand; but, to tell you the truth, I never thought about him when I saw you fall, as I supposed, from that last shot. But tell me something of all this, for I never was so bewildered. What brought you here? What was it that led to this attack upon you? and, stop a moment—tell me, Munroe, first of all, do you know anything of Miss Morrison, or where she is?'

'I do indeed,' replied Ferdinand; and then followed a brief recapitulation of all that had occurred, as they hastened on towards the house, interrupted only by the captain's exclamations of astonishment, as one scene after another was rapidly sketched by the narrator.

'Thank God!' cried Captain Sinclair with a sigh of relief, 'that I came up at that opportune moment. I heard the pistol fired as I was in the avenue. I see now that I escaped assassination myself, by going round to the police barrack. I failed in seeing the man I wanted, and was returning by the avenue. When I heard the shot, I felt somehow a strong instigation to lose not an instant in ascertaining what had happened. If I had delayed ever so little, as it seems now, your fate was fixed.'

'Indeed,' responded Ferdinand, with considerable emotion, 'I should have been in another world this moment, instead of talking here to you.—But stay,' he added, as they now drew close to the house; 'remember that we have another criminal to deal with indoors.'

'Leave her to me,' returned Captain Sinclair moodily. 'Accursed wretch! the worse of the two, by far.'

All this time, Mrs Montserrat had been prowling about in a state of indescribable restlessness, listening at open windows, slipping to the door, getting more uneasy as the expected time passed on, without any signal that success attended their dark design. At length she heard the report of the pistol, the token that the attempt had been made. At once she was at the door, pacing the verandah, clasping her hands, that twitched and quivered in the excess of her nervous anxiety; and getting more and more disturbed as minute after minute elapsed, without

the appearance of Joshua with the coveted booty.

'Idiot,' she almost screamed, 'I should have been there myself. *Mon Dieu*, if he has blundered, what will become of us?' Then, when the sound of the second shot reached her, and still no sign of the returning murderer, her feverish impatience changed into the extreme of terror; and dismal forebodings of the result to herself, in case of the failure of the plot, came with a deadly sensation that made her shake from head to foot. 'Is it come to this at last? *Mon Dieu*, I was always successful; yet if he lives, and is caught, I know he'll betray me. Fool, fool, fool! I managed better before.' And then came the determination to strive to the utmost for her own safety; no matter what was said, to brave it out, while the lingering thought remained that her mistress would stand by her. She accordingly crept back to the house, and remained lurking in the dark to see what might turn up. When the ring at the hall-door came, she bounded as though it were the bell tolling for her own execution. 'What shall I do?' she exclaimed. 'It might be Joshua.' Again it was repeated more loudly. 'It must be him—it must be him;' and she hastened to the hall with fresh hope gathering in her heart. When she opened the door, both the gentlemen designedly stood aside. 'Is it you, Joshua?' asked a whispering voice.

'No!' was the dread reply from her master.

The peal of the last trumpet could scarcely have thrilled with deeper horror the listener to that single monosyllable. She knew by the utterance that all was known, that all was over.

'Your wretched companion in crime has gone before you to the judgment-seat,' exclaimed Captain Sinclair, as he laid a strong hand upon the woman's shoulder, and drove the unresisting form in before him. 'Come, we'll find you a temporary prison here;' and he opened the door of a small pantry off the hall with a single high barred window. 'To-morrow, please God, you shall have better accommodation elsewhere. It may be well for you to know that the body of that unfortunate man Marks, whom you at any rate helped to his destruction, lies this moment at the bottom of the lake; sent there, not by any of us, but by the hand of the Great Avenger Himself; and all your plans and plots have been discovered.' So saying, he locked the door.

The unhappy woman fell with a low moan to the ground, and remained there, looking in her misery more like a heap of clothes gathered up, than a human form. In the lonely darkness, the sinful past rose up before her terrified mind, until she rose wildly up, and with appalling cries importuned for a release, and to be put somewhere with a light, and not alone. Her master took her out without a word, and locked her into her own bedroom, refusing either light or companion. The next day she was taken to Downpatrick jail; and the morning but one subsequent to her committal, was found a corpse in her cell—killed by a subtle poison that she had secreted about her person. The remains were quietly interred within the precincts of the prison, after a formal inquest. Similarly, when withdrawn from the waters, was the body of the drowned felon committed to a dishonoured grave. Words would fail to convey an idea of the effect upon Mrs Sinclair of the disclosure of her favourite's infamy, and the grievous wrong she had inflicted upon an innocent sufferer. Her husband, witnessing her extreme dismay, dealt tenderly in the matter; only by degrees informing her of all that had occurred, and endeavouring to soften the humiliating sense of her own share in the painful transactions. Her first articulate words were an anxious inquiry after Ruth (for well now, and with a bitter pang, did she recall the look of dreary, desolate anguish that stamped that fair young face when last she had looked upon it); she earnestly entreated Captain Sinclair to

go for her and bring her back—a request that needed not repetition, as, early on the day following, he and Ferdinand repaired again to Lisburn for Ruth. They found her at the hotel, as had been settled by her betrothed, in care of his uncle, the elder Mr Munroe; but in such a shattered and enfeebled state, both of mind and body, as to be unable to stir from a sofa-bed that had been prepared for her in the sitting-room. The meeting with Captain Sinclair and Ferdinand was so trying, that for hours after she could not speak. They had a long consultation with the physician; and it was then decided that she might be removed to Oaklands by easy stages, for the discomfort of a hotel for an invalid rendered the change so desirable that they determined to venture, notwithstanding her weak condition; and when, after a tedious time upon the road, they reached Oaklands, she was borne unconscious to a room that Mrs Sinclair had had prepared. The first glimpse of the old and remembered scenes induced a paroxysm of nervous excitability, so severe, that her companions were in the utmost fear. Then ensued a long and apparently hopeless illness; a fever that at once preyed upon the body and unbalanced the mind. During the sad protracted period, Ferdinand Munroe remained the welcome guest and inmate at Oaklands; at one moment buoyed up with all but joyous certainty, and again sinking into the very depths of despair. During all Ruth Morrison's hours of sickness, Mrs Sinclair never left her side, save for the short respite that now and again became indispensable; all the medicine, every cooling draught, was given by her own hand. An entire revulsion seemed to have come over this woman's mind; indolence and apathy were flung to the winds, and the one ceaseless supplication with her was for Ruth's recovery. 'If she dies,' she used to say, 'I can never know a moment's peace again.' It was comforting indeed to her to see, that whether in the wanderings of the disordered brain, or the lucid periods that intervened, her presence seemed to soothe, her absence, however brief, to increase the sufferer's distress. One evening—the crisis, it was said, was at hand—there came that turning-hour in the treacherous disease—the hour when the very shadow of the grave seems like a presence in the sick-room, and the physicians left their patient sleeping, telling those around her that sleep would either melt away into the last long slumber of all, or that she would waken up to life once more. Their breathless watch continued through all that cold dreary night; and then, with the light of a gray chill morning, the last agony of suspense passed off; the feeble but quiet whisper that came from the bed, scarcely heard through the room, told better than the physicians' verdict that the worst was over. Recovery was slow; but happiness without a flaw was now fully enjoyed by the convalescent. Ferdinand left when it was pronounced that all danger was at an end; and ultimately the arrangement was entered into, more for her than with her, that for another year she was to remain as governess at Oaklands—no longer a dependant, but as an elder daughter, a loved and cherished friend.

These were halcyon-days with Ruth. A reference to the past was never made; there seemed a tacit agreement that names whose mention could only bring up trying and terrible recollections, should be spoken no more; and even among the servants, an allusion to the former guilty inmates of the house appeared to be almost superstitiously avoided. All alike regarded the governess with esteem and affection. Then there dawned one bright spring day, when violets and primroses smiled along the grassy hedgerows, and soft sunbeams shed their mild illumination upon a small but festive train. All nature seemed to breathe a benison upon the young bridal pair. Two child-bridemaids fluttered round the central

object of the group, their 'Ruth' that was to be Miss Morrison no more. And so, the gentle bride and manly bridegroom, pledged their troth each to other, that bright spring morning, in the old parish church near Oaklands; and then went forth, hand in hand, with united hearts, to walk their road through life, content, while spared together, alike to brave the blasts or enjoy the sunshine. Thus, the dark episode in Ruth Morrison's humble history, that threw its disturbing force into the current of her earlier days, became to her but as 'that weeping that endureth for a night,' and only enhances 'the joy that cometh with the morning.'

THE END.

THE MAIDEN'S KISS.

IN 1832, an English gentleman, of the name of Pearsall, during a visit to Germany, happened to hear of the *Iron Maid* (*Eiserne Jungfrau*). Most people knew the expression; a great many believed that the Iron Maid had been an instrument for torturing offenders; a few regarded the whole matter as a mere fable. These argued that if the Iron Maid had been a torturing machine, it would be found mentioned in penal codes. This was not the case; but, nevertheless, the argument was a very lame one. The Iron Maid might have been used by secret societies, and then it was not likely to be named among public modes of punishment.

Mr Pearsall was also told that the common people, in different parts of Germany, had formerly used, as a threat, the expression: 'I'll give thee to the *Jungfrau*' (Maiden, Virgin). The phrases, too, 'to kiss the Maiden,' and 'the Maiden's Kiss,' had also been pretty familiar among the lower classes, though the words, perhaps, may not have conveyed any distinct idea. These expressions, however, strengthened Mr Pearsall in his supposition of the Iron Maid having been a machine employed for torturing. They had a striking analogy to expressions used in England with regard to various punishments: there, for instance, people spoke of 'kissing the block;' at one time, 'to kiss the Duke of Exeter's Daughter,' was a common figure of speech. Again, in Scotland, there was, and is still, the popular saying: 'He who invented the Maiden [guillotine] first hanged it;' that is, gave it its first gift.

In the same year (1832), Mr Pearsall found in a German work* the following quotation from an old chronicle: 'A.D. 1533 the *Eiserne Jungfrau* was constructed for the punishment of evil-doers within the wall of the *Froschthurn*, opposite the place called the *Sieben Zeilen*;† so at least it was publicly given out to justify the thing. Therein was an iron statue, seven feet high, which stretched out both its arms in the face of the criminal, and death by this machine was said "to send the poor sinner to the fishes;" for as soon as the executioner moved the step on which it stood, it hewed with broad hand-swords the criminal into little pieces, which were swallowed by the fishes in hidden waters.' The author of the *Mittheilungen*, however, was also among those who gave no credit to the stories on the subject.

Nevertheless, Mr Pearsall did not let the matter rest, but went to Nuremberg himself. He searched all manner of nooks, found various engines of torture, but no Iron Maid. A guide who conducted him through the *Rathhaus* also told him that the object had never existed, at least not in Nuremberg. Neither did this opinion discourage the determined Englishman. Like a genuine knight-errant, he wandered about from one place to another in search of his Maid, hoping at last to rescue her from the prison of Oblivion. Meditating

* *Mittheilungen zur Nürnbergischen Geschichte*, von Dr C. Siebenkees. Nürnberg, 1792.

† In Nuremberg.

on the quotation from the old chronicle, he went to a celebrated antiquary of Nuremberg, Dr Mayer, from whom, to his great satisfaction, he learned that the account was not a fiction. An Iron Maid had formerly stood in a vault in Nuremberg: it had been, however, transported in a cart two or three days before the entry of the French. The chamber, however, which had contained it was well known to Dr Mayer.

This was one step towards the discovery. With the obliging antiquary, Mr Pearsall proceeded to investigate the interesting spot. There could be no doubt that the vault shewn him by Dr Mayer was the one alluded to in the chronicle. In the centre of the floor was a square hole, on the sides of which were some hinges. 'Through the opening,' says Mr Pearsall, 'could be seen a larger vault beneath. This was arched like the upper chamber, and on the ground could be seen large pieces of wood, shewing clearly that a construction of no ordinary dimensions had once existed there.' What that construction had been, the reader shall learn by and by.

Mr Pearsall's curiosity was now greater than ever. Whether the Iron Maid had tortured many bodies or not, it, at all events, must have become a torture to Mr Pearsall's mind. He had no peace after his return to England, and in 1834 he was induced to pay another visit to Germany.

This time, he was to be more successful. One day, in Vienna, some one spoke to him of Baron Dietrich's valuable collection of antiquities, and affirmed that an Iron Maid was also amongst the number of curiosities in the castle of Feistritz. Mr Pearsall hastened to the seat of this nobleman, and there, with his own eyes, he saw the Iron Maid. There could be no doubt that this machine was the one mentioned in the chronicle: the dimensions were the same, and the accounts of the possessor corroborated with those of Dr Mayer. This Iron Maid, Baron Dietrich said, had been purchased of some persons who had transported it in a cart from Nuremberg two or three days before the entry of the French.

In the account* from which we have derived part of our information on this subject, Mr Pearsall has confined himself to giving an accurate relation of his researches, and has not described his personal feelings. We can, however, imagine with what sentiments of antiquarian affection and joy he gazed upon the long-sought object. The happiness of Ulysses on finding Penelope safe and sound, could scarcely have exceeded the delight felt by Mr Pearsall when, after numerous inquiries and many journeys, he beheld his Iron Maid, and found her in good condition.

Thus far about Mr Pearsall.

The Iron Maid can now be seen in the chamber where the chronicle reports it to have been placed in 'the good old times.' Entering a door close to the *Maz Thor*, the visitor descends thirty or forty steps, and, passing through the casements under the town-wall, arrives at a sort of antechamber, where the prisoners were detained before being led to execution. Almost opposite this room is a narrow passage, terminating in a door; the visitor opens it, and he is in the torture-chamber.

In the middle of this vault stands a figure seven feet high, representing a Nuremberg woman of the sixteenth century. Her head wears a sort of cap; the body is covered with a long cloak, ornamented by a curious border. The front part of the figure consists of valves, united with the back by strong hinges. When opened, the Iron Maid presents to view a carcass of bars and hoops, coated with iron. In the inside of the valves are twenty-three quadrangular poniards, thirteen of which stick in the right breast, eight in the left, and one in each side of the face. The bottom is a trap-door, which is opened

by touching a spring on the outside of the figure. As soon as the criminal was placed in the Maid, the valves were, by machinery, forced upon him. In this terrible pressure consisted the *Maiden's Kiss* (embrace would perhaps be a more correct expression). After a while, the trap-door was opened, and he was 'sent to the fishes.' These might indeed rejoice, for not only did they get human flesh, but they got it nicely cut up, for the offender fell through the trap-door into the lower chamber, upon a machine composed of a number of movable swords (it is this contrivance Mr Pearsall means in the passage we quoted above), which, set in motion by the fall of the body, cut it up in a most terrible manner. Thereupon, a sluice was opened, and the water carried away all traces of the barbarous punishment.

This cradle of swords makes one believe that originally there were no poniards inside the figure (or, at all events, smaller ones); for, supposing even the spikes which the machine has now, did not kill the prisoner as soon as they had pierced him, he certainly must have been dead before the body could loosen itself from the points on which it hung. Thus the movable swords below would have been perfectly useless.

Near the door of the upper room was formerly another door, now walled up; it opened into a subterranean passage, that communicated with the Banner House. Thence the prisoners could be brought to the torture-chamber with greater secrecy than by the way open to visitors.

It is a fearful place, that dismal vault, into which the light of day never shone. The skin feels chilled by the damp air, and the blood runs cold when one looks at the fiendish invention in the middle of the chamber. The horrid scene of old days passes through one's mind. One fancies one beholds those merciless men sitting in judgment over the poor offender; one hears his faltering steps, his vain appeals to man, and his fervent prayers to God; one sees his parted lips and starting eye, as he is led to the infernal machine—a grating noise as it is being closed jars on the ear—there is a shriek of agony—the cries turn into moans—the moans die away into silence—the judges rise from their seats, and walk away, and all is again still, still as the walls that saw, but never told of those deeds of darkness.

There is reason to suppose that the Iron Maid was not invented in Germany. Most of the machines of torture in that country were remarkable for their rudeness and simplicity, which cannot be said of the object in question. It is far more likely that the Iron Maid was transplanted to Germany from Spain, where a great deal more ingenuity was shewn in the construction of such machines, and where something similar, the *Mater Dolorosa*, is known to have existed.

Nuremberg was neither the first nor only place in Germany where the *Maiden's Kiss* was inflicted. Such Iron Maids existed in many German towns. Wittenberg had even two such machines. From the two following bills, which were found there, can be seen that one of the Iron Maids already required repairing in the year 1509.

'1509, iij gl. vor zweyn Jungfrawen in das gefenchnis weiter zu machen und vor iij gelencken zu machen.'

'1 gl. vor zweyn gelencken zu einer Jungfraw in das gefenchnis gemacht und die Kette also hienit gebessert.'

Some are of opinion that a machine of torture like that we have described was already known in Greece about 200 a.c. Hampton, in his *Polybius* (vol. ii. p. 201), attributes the invention of it to Nabis, tyrant of Sparta. 'He contrived,' says Hampton, 'a machine, if it may be called by such a name, an image of a woman, magnificently dressed, and formed in a most exact resemblance of his wife; and when his intent was to draw money from any of the citizens, he invited

* *Archæologia, or Miscellaneous Tracts relating to Antiquity. London, 1838, vol. xxvii.*

them to his house, and represented to them the great cost of maintaining the worship of the gods. If these arguments prevailed, it was sufficient for his purpose; but if all his solicitations were without effect, then he used to say: 'I want, it seems, the power of persuasion; but Apega, I believe, will persuade you.' Apega was the name of his wife. Upon these words, an image of the woman that he had mentioned appeared. Nabis then taking her by the hand, raised her from the seat, and folding afterwards his arms round the person whom he had been soliciting, brought him near by degrees to the body of the image, whose breast, arms, and hands were stuck full of points of iron, concealed under her clothes; and then, pressing the back of the pretended woman with his hands, by means of some secret spring, he fixed the man close to her breast, and soon forced him to promise all he desired.

Some of these statements must be doubted. The simple assertion that a machine like the one described by Hampton existed in Greece, may be true; we, for our part, however, are inclined to ascribe the honour of such inventions to the ingenious cruelty of the middle ages.

POPULAR READING-ROOMS.

It has been remarked, that the success of reading-rooms and libraries for the 'working-classes' is very capricious. In some large towns, especially in the north, they have been gladly used by those for whom they were established, and have grown up in a healthy manner; in the country, too, even in the most rural districts, the reading-room has often been welcomed and supported; but of those that have been established in London, some have failed altogether from the very first; others, by dint of industrious nursing, have struggled on or died slowly; while very few have taken root. Many reasons are given for this contrast between the wants of the metropolis and other large towns. Some think that there is too little fellow-feeling in London for an institution of the kind—not enough *esprit de corps* among those for whom it is intended. They are a heap of sand, having no local or parochial connection, but moving about here and there in the great city without forming social ties anywhere, hiring a lonely room in a crowd of streets, and never staying long enough to become interested in so quiet a concern as a reading-room. It may be so. There are, however, several features in the establishment of a reading-room which may make it unattractive, and which are perhaps most likely to be found in London, where, at the outset, the arrangement of the matter is often wholly in the hands of managers, not *bond-fide* members of the institution.

May it not be, for instance, that a reading-room which is opened by kindly-disposed people professedly for the 'working-classes,' and in which they are invited to raise their tastes and develop their intellects, as if they had no other chance of finding out how to do it by themselves, or as if they admitted a general loose charge of degradation, is rather officious and patronising? Few people like to be patronised; few like to be told that they are being looked after. Who admits to the world that he is ignorant, and wants to be taught? Shew me the man, and I will admire him as unique in learning and good sense. No wonder, then, when Mr This, and the Rev. That, and Dr Tother, have met in committee, and decided on providing something professedly advertised and intended to refine the minds of the apprentice and artisan, that the latter think: 'Thankee, gentlemen, but we'd rather not.' And so the affair is opened with a flourish, and improving books are bought, and classes are organised, and bills are stuck up; but nobody comes. The kind gentlemen are distressed at the indifference to mental improvement

which is displayed in their neighbourhood, and presently get rid of the lease of the premises.

This has been the story of many mechanics' institutions. They have failed, or have been gradually taken possession of by another class. The fact is, call the institutions by what name you will, we want places in which more provision is made for wholesome amusement than for self-education. It is a mistake to suppose that there is any great thirst for book-learning among those who work hard all day; it is not in the nature of things. Nobody is to blame. There is no sign of indifference to improvement in this. Very few men can tax their muscles all day and their brains all the evening. You can't expect a man to fill up the leisure moments of his time with *study*, however light. Some will do so, no doubt. There are some people who are never tired, who 'improve themselves' at every spare minute, who keep grammars and candle-ends in their garrets, and pore over mathematics at tea-time. But would you blame those who do no such things? Would you even think them defective—indifferent to their prospects? It is a matter of superfluous energy. When a man has stuck heartily to the bench or the anvil for nine or ten hours, he has done his duty for the day. Small blame to him if he does not set to work with his book as soon as he has cleaned himself. In many, nay, in most cases, he cannot do it. Study is toil, and very exhaustive toil too. When the artisan reads, he wants something that shall be entertaining. Let us hope it will convey some information; but it must be pleasant, it must carry him on, and not need to be pursued with labour and brow-contracting effort. Remember this, and you hold the secret of a reading-room. If ever you have to do with the establishment of one, dismiss the idea of severe self-education. What do lawyers, merchants, and men of business, read after office-hours, ay, and occasionally during these hours, too, but newspapers, reviews, periodicals. And if a book be read at all, will it not be an entertaining one? After a certain age, few men of any class, even with the best opportunities, can *study* with profit. They want something which shall be amusing as well as instructive. The leader of the paper must be spirited, the budget from the special correspondent graphic. A dull book, however worthy, is discarded, uncut, unsold.

Yet I have seen libraries for 'the poor' in which dulness seemed to be the guiding taste of the collector. Heavy, correct, unquestionably respectable, above a suspicion of flippancy or fun, the dreary volumes waited on the shelf in vain. But if any one ought to be provided with bright, cheerful literature, it is the man who works hard with his hands, perhaps at a depressing trade, all day. If he does not get this, he will read highly-spiced Frenchified fiction, which engrosses his attention at the risk of deiling his mind. Furnish your reading-room, then, with plenty of light wholesome provender, and the books will be read, to pieces. Be content with providing healthy mental amusement, and you will refresh many a mind which would otherwise, perhaps, have poisoned itself. Save yourself the expense and disappointment of supplying food which requires much intellectual mastication. The geniuses who fight their way up to a higher station in society will manage to find the means to do so. Don't distress yourself to help them; they will help themselves. A man who wants to be shoved up the ladder, will slip down again, directly you take your hand away. Let him climb alone, and he will grow stronger as he rises. Be satisfied with saving others from a degrading descent, and you will make your reading-room or library popular and useful.

It is well, moreover, to have two rooms in your establishment, one of which may be devoted to conversation, or which will at least accommodate the talkers, while the other is kept comparatively quiet. Most men like to chat over the news as well as read them;

may, the best scholar will often read aloud to the rest, with pauses for general comment. But if you don't provide a second room, where a book may be taken, or a game of chess played without interruption, your institution is seriously defective. Two rooms will generally be enough, unless you wish to devote one to smoking. There are difficulties, however, in the way of this: it is distinctly injurious to growing lads, and an opportunity for indulging in it ought not to be given to them. On the other hand, the man who likes a quiet pipe over his paper is too often driven into the public-house, if he cannot obtain his favourite indulgence elsewhere. The smoking-room ought to depend on the views entertained regarding the establishment. If lads are excluded, it may be feasible, and indeed save men from the temptation of spending money which they and their families can ill spare; but boys must not be assisted in the consumption of tobacco.

This brings us, however, to another important question: For whom should the reading-room be provided? For grown-up men or youths? I am inclined to think it will be most useful if devoted to lads. In the first place, a man has generally a home of his own, and is a husband, if not a father. It is very doubtful whether good is done by adding to the number of places to which men can resort, leaving their families at home. We want to see the homes of the working-classes more comfortable, and not new places, however respectable, which are calculated, if not to tempt them away from their own firesides, yet, at least, to furnish another excuse for leaving them. Suppose popular and well-conducted reading-rooms to be general; if frequented by men, so many wives would be left to spend their evenings either alone or in unwholesome gossip. A man who has been out at work all day should spend his evening (reading his paper, and smoking his pipe, if he will) by his own fireside; or, if he does go out to any place of innocent amusement, it should be one to which he can take his wife.

It is far different in the case of lads or young men in lodgings. What are they to do? They can't be put to bed like the baby. If left to roam off on their own account after tea, the chances are they get into some mischief. They have not the patience to sit still at home. They fidget about, and crowd up the room. Mother wants to do a bit of needle-work, father wants to rest. What are Tom, and Dick, and Bill to do? It is, after all, for these that the reading-room is most needed? There is no difficulty in getting them to come; they are only too glad, and if they are admitted, they soon have the whole place to themselves. Men won't associate with them—they are too frisky by far. Charged with an excess of high spirits, not yet lowered by the care and tug of life, they cannot help a certain amount of harmless noise and frolicsomeness. A place with two rooms, one being kept comparatively quiet for the readers, chess and draught players, and the other devoted to conversation, restlessness, and limited play, would be a great comfort both to the lads and their friends. The latter would know that they were safe, and would enjoy quiet evenings. The boys themselves, needing mainly companionship and a safety-valve for spirits, would come in shoals. Of course, the supervision must be firm, though not too strict. The members, who should pay so much a week for the use of their club-room and library, must be allowed a considerable amount of freedom and legitimate noise.

Such an institution has two distinct advantages—it keeps its members out of mischief, and supplements the school. As a supplement to the school, it may have lectures and classes, but perhaps its main educational effect is given by a supply of wholesome entertaining literature. When a boy has learned to read without spelling, he has learned only half of the art.

He reads slowly with the lips, pronouncing the words to himself as he goes on. This is tedious work, however, and soon tires the reader. But an engrossing book, say of travels or adventure, carries him on, and in time he learns to read with the eye alone. Then he reads with pleasure, not before. A judicious supply of entertaining books will thus fix the faculty of reading in many who have been at school, indeed, but without practice would soon lose what facility they had acquired in the class, to say nothing of the great importance of fresh and wholesome food for the young. Voyages and travels especially enlarge the lad's mind: many a one owes more than he thinks of his knowledge of the world to the books he devoured when a boy. Then he insensibly learns geography, history, manners, and customs, or poisons his imagination with some vile though absorbing publication. A really entertaining library may thus do incalculable good to a large number of youths. Finding a cheerful room, pleasant books, light, warmth, companionship, some of their freshest impressions, when beginning to earn their own bread, will be wholesome. Moreover, though allowed fair vent for high spirits, by frequenting an institution which is superintended by kind and sympathising men, they escape, more or less, that spirit of rude independence, with which a boy, uncertain of his position, and left to go his own way, is almost sure to defend himself. Let him quite alone, and he thinks it manly to be impudent and rough. Give him an interest in a civilised institution, which at the same time is devoted to the boy-interest, and he appreciates the importance of the affair. He belongs to and partly supports it; he catches the spirit of sympathy, and upholds the respectability of the concern.

Certain it is that reading-rooms for lads have promised to be far more successful than others, though they have not yet been extensively tried. At any rate, they are free from the possible danger of drawing the heads of families away from their homes; nay, when Dick and Bob are not larking or lounging about the room, Paterfamilias Carpenter is far more likely to spend a quiet evening there. Thus, a youths' institute benefits those who are left at home as well as those who belong to it. It provides wholesome entertainment for lads who must have some, and who will take what is had unless they are provided with that which is good. By an abundant supply of hearty genuine boys' books, it ripens the power of reading, which is too often somewhat small, even after the scholar has left the school, and by a judicious addition of voluntary classes, enables those who are ambitious of rising in the world to continue their studies.

A GIFT-HORSE.

WE must not, the proverb tells us, look a gift-horse in the mouth. The axiom is a two-edged one, and cuts both ways. Chivalric gratitude is by no means the only motive that should deter a prudent man from prying into that eleemosynary quadruped's incisors. Gift-horses are thin-skinned animals, and it is hardly safe to examine their dental anatomy. This peril was well illustrated in an old, old Comic Annual of dear Hood's, by a wood-cut depicting a rampant equine monster, with tremendous jaws, gobbling up its new proprietor, boots and all. That miserable man had been deaf to the warnings of wisdom; he had looked a gift-horse in the mouth, and suffered accordingly.

Gift-horses are of all shapes, colours, and dimensions. They infest every walk of life. My unfortunate acquaintance, the Hon. and Rev. Charles Rapid, met with his gift-horse in the very respectable guise of a family living. There was really no harm in Charley,

a good-humoured rattling lad, with abundance of animal spirits, but with no overplus of brains to ballast his handsome head. As an officer, especially on some frontier station where work was plenty, and play unknown, I am sure that Mr Rapid would have been a credit to his friends. But, as ill-luck would have it, the Earl of Fasterton was patron of the living of Butterton-cum-Creamley, in Cheshire, and poor Charley had been marked from his very cradle as the sucking incumbent of that snug benefice. They sent him to Oxford, where he was plucked over and over again, till not a scholastic feather could have been left on him, and had to 'go down,' desperately in debt, narrowly escaping an interview with Mr Commissioner Fonblanque. How, by private interest and feminine manœuvring, they got somebody who knew the bishop's chaplain to coax his lordship into ordaining him, I cannot tell; but I know that Charley has been at Aix-la-Chapelle these three years, that his living is sequestered for the benefit of creditors, and that a decent subaltern of Irregulars has been swamped utterly—and all through a gift-horse.

A church-living is, however, the mildest disguise which this terrible animal ever deigns to assume. More often, instead of a cassock and bands, it blazes out in scarlet and gold, and catches its victims, as codfish are lured to the hook, with a bit of bright colour. Lord Bigwig's word has weight at the Horse Guards. His lordship takes an Olympian interest in the numerous family of his old tutor, the Rev. Joseph Satchel, whom he has made vicar of Stony Crampton, and he will get young Tom appointed ensign in the Hundred and Fifth Foot. Mother and girls are in ecstasies, brothers rather envious; the vicar nervously computes the cost of outfit, the probable allowance necessary to enable the boy to 'do as others do,' and would almost like to refuse, but fears to offend Lord Bigwig. Sam, the eldest, is reading for orders, and his hopes of preferment are based upon the great man's favour; it will never do to seem ungrateful in this matter of Tom's pair of colours. So the vicar and his wife opine, in many an anxious curtain conference on ways and means. So Tom joins the Hundred and Fifth; and his habits get more expensive every year, for the regiment is a crack corps, and he has to keep company with those whose purses are longer than his own; and the household at Stony Crampton is pinched, and the children are stinted, because of my Lord Bigwig and his gift-horse.

This baleful horse has a trick of lurking in places where we should least look for him. Nor does he confine his ravages to the youth of our species; neither sex, and no age, can confer immunity from his dire influence. What a good fellow was Thwackett—eminent both as a man and an ironmaster—before, in evil hour, the major part of the electors of Bellowsbury sent a deputation to invite him to represent them in parliament. He has been, ever since he was entitled to write M.P. after his name, a nuisance to everybody, in and out of the House. He makes the dreariest speeches, not at St Stephen's, where they have a knack of coughing him down, in self-defence, but at mechanics' institutes, at corporation feasts, even at school anniversaries, where he has the cruelty to pour streams of verbiage on the heads of the young. He is not so good a master, not so warm a friend, not so hearty an alderman of Bellowsbury, as he was before they forced the gift-horse upon him at fifty years of age.

A title has been a gift-horse fatal to many men, and to more women. Dear, comely Mrs Snooks, the most hospitable creature in Yarnchester, so charitable that the poor felt an actual warmth and comfort from her very presence when she looked into their sad dwellings, never empty-handed, was more than half spoiled when they made Sir Benjamin a baronet. She grew to be ashamed of her honest parents, of her broad north-country accent, of her Christian name of Jemima.

She gave Sir Benjamin no peace till he took her to London, where she lived more grandly, but not half so happily as among her provincial friends. When last I heard of her, she had suborned a herald to prove her husband's descent from Ranulph de Snoke, temp. William I.; for it is a notable feature in gift-horses of the class that afflicted Sir Benjamin, that the recipients cannot bear to admit their short acquaintance with such animals, but try to persuade the world that they have been on horseback from the beginning.

Office—no mere red-tape affair, no automatic signing of names and drawing of salaries, but the administration of a province, the leadership of the Commons, Government House at Calcutta, or the Premier's thorny cushion—these be gift-horses that are hungrier for human flesh than ever were those fierce mares of Diomedes, of which Homer sang. Office kills the old, the sickly, the sensitive. If a man have but sorry stamina, like Pitt or Canning, office wields shears sharper than those of Atropos, and snips the vital thread before the Psalmist's tale of man's life be nearly told. A very conscientious, delicate, self-seeing soul gets withered, as a scroll by flame, by the hot blast of office. Hot-tempered folks, who mean well, are pricked to death with pin points by the vexations of office. Venerable citizens, who come with honoured weight of years, silver hair, and the experience of a private station, to take office for their country's good, get cruelly worried by the political gift-horse, and seldom escape alive from his formidable grinders. It needs a strong and supple rider, not too thin of skin, not too nice in expedients, to curb that savage brute with the hand of a master.

There was poor old Jenkins, the 'oldest inhabitant,' the oldest Englishman; he was killed by a gift-horse. When he was aged about a century and a half, people got up a kind of excitement about him, who had cheated Death, the great gleaner, so long. Jenkins, a plain fisherman, must go up to London to be stared at by the august eyes of majesty, to drink the king's health in the presence of princes, to bend his stiffening knee before the fountain of honour. They would give the old man a treat, they vowed; shew him London, shew him Whitehall, shew him life. Instead of life, they shewed death to old Jenkins. Very, very soon after the old man knelt before King Charles, he did homage to the King of Terrors. London and royalty, riot and excitement, drank up what little oil remained at the bottom of the antique lamp that had surprised men by burning so long.

In the East, no worse mishap can befall a middle-class mortal than to be chosen as the one whom the bey or prince delights to honour. His Excellency sends a twopenny khelaut, let us say, three coarse shawls on a tray, two pipes, a piece of silk, and a few jars of sorry sweetmeats. The shouting servants who bring these things must have their mouths stopped with roast lamb, sherbet, Shiraz wine, silver armlets, and gold tomauns. My lord the governor expects a nuzzur, or return-present, worth eight or ten times the cost of his condescending sprat to catch a whale. Rich stuffs, good English broadcloth, gold watches, sword-blades of Khorassan, saddles, guns, and dollars, are all piled up by trembling hands, and the sheep of commerce finds his golden fleece shorn pretty closely by the shears of official cupidity. But better so, than to incur the bastinado and the nose-bag full of hot ashes, by proving contumacious towards the ruler of the land, and looking a gift-horse in the mouth.

Leaving fact, for a moment, to turn to fiction, what a vicious neck-breaking beast was that appointment of Justice of the Peace for the shire of Galloway, which King George was 'pleased' to bestow on Mr Bertram, in *Guy Mannering*. As a J. P., the kindly, feather-brained laird's whole nature was changed, and hence came quarrels with his old smuggling and gipsy

well-wishers, Dirk Hatteraick's enmity, Kennedy's murder, and a grand total of at least four violent deaths, to say nothing of the child-stealing business. All these things, as the student of Scott will observe, might have remained undone, had that flinging, spiteful crib-biter of a gift-horse never been admitted to the Bertram stables.

Sometimes the malicious animal comes in humble guise, and nets his prey by retail. A haunch of venison arrives, let us say, for little Griggles, of Nelson Villa, semi-detached, a man whom everybody likes. It is by no means direct from the noble grower, but comes at third-hand, through a friend's friend; and the butcher, whom Griggles blushing consults, declares that in ten days it will be 'just the thing.' Mrs G. is wick for a party—not that she cares, of course, for worldly splendour, but it is such an admirable occasion for assembling their connection, who must be propitiated, you know, for the dear children's sake. The haunch—a gift-haunch—will go so far, that the rest of the feast, take Mrs G.'s word for it, will cost nothing, or next to nothing. Mrs Griggles prevails. The dinner, swelling and swelling till twenty-two guests are jammed into the narrow banquet-hall at Nelson Villa, semi-detached, exacts Mr Gunter's assistance; costs forty-seven pounds; offends, mortally, nine-and-thirty dear friends asked as 'refreshers'—to come in the evening—and goes far towards plunging the miserable little head of Griggles beneath the waters of debt.

Gift-horses are not above appearing in even meaner masquerade. A bottle of wine, incautiously inserted in a hamper from home, along with the cake, and jam, and potted beef, will get Briggs, major, into such terrible scrapes with his schoolmaster as even birch can hardly put an end to. The misguided boy will give a spread—he is classical, and calls it a symposium or 'blow-out'—in his dormitory, assembling a few choice spirits at the midnight hour to sip sherry out of a tooth-mug, and snatching a fearful joy from bread—with plums in it—eaten in secret; and when the revel is at the highest, in comes the doctor, and surprises the whole crew of carousing conspirators.

The wooden horse of Troy is a brute that insults the human understanding. How that great goggling monster, the hugest and most outrageous gift-horse that looms through even the dim borderland of history, could have been dragged into a besieged city, and there left to disembark its brass-greaved passengers, defies conjecture. But in spite of the natural reluctance of some long-headed Trojans, the countrymen of Hector seem to have had the superstitious reverence for a gift-horse which we moderns yet experience.

The Golden Knight of Hinchinbrooke, Sir Oliver Cromwell, found his gift-horse in the shape of a royal visit, and ruined himself, like a loyal blockhead, to do honour to king and courtiers. Leicester, though he had probably an eye to the main chance, stabled a steed of the same sort, when Elizabeth deigned to feast with him at Kenilworth. The royal gift-horse kicked down a fine fortune on both occasions; nor were Cromwell and Amy Robsart's husband the only men who have beggared themselves for a smile from majesty.

Gift-horses—and, indeed, horses of any sort, save the ponies of Assam and Pegu—are not much in fashion in Burmah, but the king has an efficient substitute in his white elephants. We are all taught, along with our geography, how, when a Burmese subject grows over-rich or too popular, his sovereign claps an extinguisher upon him in the form of a white elephant—a gift so sacred and weighty, that the expenses of keeping the big brute in proper style are pretty sure to crush the proprietor. Can we fancy the inward tremors of a rich man of Burmah, when he hears the tom-toms, the trumpets, the hideous howling of the singers, the roar of the mob, announcing

that the elephant is on its road! He watches from his neat cane verandah, hoping for the best—hoping that the elephant is only out for an airing; that it is not for him; that it is for Bombadjee Loola, who has saved two crores, and lives hard by. Alas! There is no hope. Here comes the white elephant, stately, inexorable, enormous. He comes with his guards, his retinue, his hangers-on and led-captains, his she-goats to give him milk, his grass-cutters, his fruit-purveyors, his mahouts, keepers, valets, priests even—all his household, who must eat of the sweet, and drink of the strong, hereafter, at the cost and charges of him to whom the king has given the white elephant. There are chiefs, too, who must be fed and flattered, and sent back with presents; see how their gold umbrellas and bossy shields, their Indian armour and China silks, flash glorious in the sun! How the trumpets bray, how the drums rattle as the elephant halts! And out runs the poor trembling hypocrite, with his hands outspread, salaming, grateful, and grovels in the dust before the hateful four-footed visitor, that is come, literally, to eat him out of house and home.

Space fails to describe the many forms and disguises of the gift-horse. Sir Anthony Absolute forcing a rich bride upon his rebellious son, is one illustration; and Napoleon insisting that his brothers should be real kings, and wear crowns on their poor heads, is another. How the weaker Bonapartes ran away from those realms that their imperious relative thrust upon them! how they abdicated! Jerome even flinging down his shabby diadem in a Paris café.

But in all gift-horses there is one invariable feature: they may throw you, kick you, bite you; but if you would avoid giving mortal offence to the donors, you must mount when hidden, and ask no questions about it.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE Society of Arts have begun their session in a way that looks like going to work in earnest. They show an increase in their number of members; their President delivers them an address, which, excepting the necrological notices, is a series of congratulations on the subjects of which he treats; in addition to the ordinary evening meetings, he announces that courses of lectures will be given on special subjects, first, 'On International Law and its Commercial Relations;' to be followed by 'Chemistry applied to the Arts,' and 'The Fine Arts applied to Industry.' At the conclusion of his address, the chairman handed the Prince Consort's prize of twenty-five guineas to Mr W. Vaughan, who had entitled himself to it by having gained first-class certificates four years in succession in arithmetic, geometry, algebra, conic sections, and mensuration and book-keeping. 'I cannot help observing,' said the chairman to the young man, 'that while studying mathematics, you did not forget the importance of obtaining knowledge which would be useful in the practical duties of life, having, in 1862, taken the first prizes in book-keeping and mensuration.' Besides all this, the Society publish a list of one hundred and fourteen subjects, on which they invite descriptive articles or accounts of discoveries and inventions; they offer a prize 'for the best and most efficient steam fire-engine for land use,' and 'for the best and most efficient steam fire-engine capable of self-propulsion on land.' Another prize is offered to female artists 'for the best cameo designed and executed on any of the shells ordinarily

used for that purpose.' Sir Walter Trevelyan's prize of seventy pounds and the Society's gold medal are offered 'for the discovery of a process for preserving fresh meat better than by any method hitherto employed, and applicable to the preservation of meat in countries where it is now almost valueless, so as to render it an article of commerce, and available for stores on shipboard;' and lastly, a prize of twenty-five pounds and a medal are offered 'for the most approved designs for cottages, to be built singly, or in pairs, at a cost not exceeding one hundred pounds each.'

Geologists and natural philosophers are still inquiring into the facts of the recent earthquake, and from time to time, additional particulars are gathered. The shock was noticed in a curious way at Greenwich Observatory: one of the assistants was observing a fixed mark through the telescope, when he saw the image of the mark make a downward movement, then rise to its former position. This movement, as explained by the astronomer-royal, was occasioned by the sudden vibration of the telescope stand by the earthquake.—On the coast of Wales, in Caermarthen Bay, a cone of muddy water was seen rising above the general surface, and moving with considerable speed and agitation across the bay and out to sea, where it was lost sight of. This singular phenomenon took place at eleven in the morning on the day of the earthquake. By reports from the East, we learn that shocks were felt at Tunis on the same date, and a new volcanic island appeared in the Mediterranean. It is remarkable that in the South Wales coal-districts, although the shock was felt on the surface, it was neither felt nor heard by the miners underground.—In the range of the Mendips, near Cheddar, the water in a well was observed, soon after the shock, to be covered with foam, to the great astonishment of the family resident on the spot. We hope that Mr Robert Mallet, who, by his recent work on *Seismology*, has become an authority on the subject of earthquakes, will be able to collate all the facts that may be collected, and discover therein some further explanation of earthquake phenomena.

The Photographic Society have been thrown into agreeable excitement by the discovery of some old pictures on paper and metal, which are supposed to be photographs and daguerreotypes. They were found among a great mass of waste papers in the Library of old Matthew Boulton's house at Soho, Birmingham, where they had lain undisturbed for more than fifty years. One is a view of the old house itself; the others are mostly copies of well-known paintings, taken by some process in which no brush, pencil, or other implement appears to have been used. The history of the discovery, as set forth in the Society's *Journal*, is remarkably interesting, and well worth perusal, even by those who are not photographers. Further evidence on the subject may be looked for; meanwhile, it is a surprise to have it even suggested that the first photographs were produced at the Works in which were constructed the first steam-engines.

Mr Fox Talbot, who has done so much for photography, has recently achieved what may be called his crowning success. He throws a picture upon the surface of a steel-plate, and engraves it there in such a way by the action of light, without the use of a tool, that five thousand impressions may be printed from it. A specimen has been shewn representing a tropical landscape, taken, we believe, in Java, the softness and finish of which must satisfy even the most fastidious artist. Supposing that there be no mistake in the estimated number of copies that may be printed, this discovery bids fair to become of high utility in the dissemination of works of art.

Among new inventions in the medical arts, are two very powerful styptics, which will doubtless be taken into consideration by the profession. One is a solution of one part crystallised perchloride of

iron in six parts of collodion. It must be prepared slowly and carefully: the colour then appears a yellowish red, in which condition, if applied to wounds or leech-bites, it forms over them an elastic pellicle. The other, discovered by Professor Piazza of Bologna, is composed of equal quantities of a solution of chloride of iron with concentrated solution of chloride of sodium. Lint, saturated with this, is applied to wounds.—Dr J. Chapman has published a paper on what he describes as 'a new Method of treating Disease by controlling the Circulation of the Blood.' He effects this control by the application of heat or cold to different parts of the body, chiefly the back and spine. The nerves are affected by the temperature, a sympathetic effect is produced in the blood, and so in turn in the part diseased.—M. Tigris states in a recent communication to the Academy of Sciences at Paris, that certain kinds of infusoria are developed in human blood during certain kinds of illness; and that certain other kinds are developed after death, and become active agents in the process of putrefaction.—In another communication by Mr S. de Luca, the author gives the results of his investigations into the relative weights of the different bones of the human skeleton. From these, it appears that the bones on the right half of the body are heavier than those on the left, and the same difference prevails even in the two halves of the skull. Dividing a skeleton at the position of the navel, it is found that the bones of the upper half of the body are the same weight as those of the lower half. The bones of the hand are one-fifth the weight of those of the whole arm; a similar proportion is observable in the length of the hand and arm; and on an average the bones of the hand weigh less than those of the foot. Other examples are given, but these will suffice to convey a notion of the subject generally. The author remarks that the discovery has a practical application, for as a similar proportion is found in studying the bones of 'the inferior animals,' the facts which he has ascertained may be made useful in ascertaining the age of bones, and in enabling anatomists and paleontologists to reconstruct imperfect skeletons.

At a meeting of the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, an improved brick-making machine was exhibited, which tempers the clay, moulds it into bricks at the rate of from 50 to 60 per minute, 'at a cost of 22 cents per thousand, including engineer, machine tender, coal, and oil.' Specimens of the bricks were exhibited at the same time, and were pronounced to be 'very good and strong.' One of them had withstood a pressure of sixty tons; and we are informed that 'several of these machines are in practical operation, making from twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand bricks each per day.' The inventor is Mr Cyrus Chambers of Philadelphia. At the same meeting, a letter-box was exhibited, which in exterior form resembles those in ordinary use; but inside, there 'are two inclined plates, one of these plates being so placed beneath the opening, that the letters, when introduced into the box, will fall on the plate, and be carried towards the back, where they will strike the second plate, and be guided to such a position beneath the first, that they cannot be withdrawn by any instrument thrust in through the opening of the box.'—To meet the demand created by the war, an 'army medicine-wagon' has been invented, in which the cases containing the drugs are so arranged that a central space is left, forming an apartment in which medicines may be prepared without disturbance in stormy weather; while to the outside of the wagon are attached a number of hand-ambulances and other articles needed for sick or wounded soldiers. 'In case of necessity, by slightly altering the position of one of the boxes, room may be gained in which to seat six or eight men.'—Another invention, which seems worth notice, is a four-wheeled carriage, weighing not more than

a hundred and eighteen pounds, in which the springs are india-rubber, each five pounds in weight, attached at one end to a lever, which at the other is fastened to the axle near the wheel. The seat rests on the india-rubber springs. 'As thus constructed, each wheel acts on the body through a spring independently of the others, so that in case one wheel of the vehicle should strike an obstacle, it will rise, pass over it, and resume its former position, without disturbing the general equilibrium of the vehicle, or in the least acting on the other springs.'

Among recent news from India, we learn that Sir Charles Trevelyan has offered a prize of 500 rupees for an essay on a subject which, among the students and scholars connected with India, will perhaps find some ready to take it up. 'Compare the influence of Greek learning on the Arabs under the Abbasside Caliphs of Bagdad and the Ommyyade Caliphs of Cordova, with the subsequent influence of Arabian learning on the reviving European mind after the dark ages; and from the comparison, infer the probable influence which the mature intellect of Europe should exercise in its turn, now that it is once more brought in contact with the Mohammedan mind in India.' It is a wide subject; and perhaps the more interesting because of the stubbornness with which Mohammedan races everywhere resist the intellectual influences of Western Europe.—To revert to a more material subject—cotton—the news is promising. From Madras alone the quantity exported in 1862 was 241,529 pounds—more than double the quantity of 1860; and in the present year it is expected to be still greater. Another good sign is a very lively demand for cotton-gins at the manufactory at Dharwar, where, although eight gins a day were turned out, there were in April last more than a thousand customers waiting to be supplied.

Not long ago there occurred in Prussia one of those cases of detection of crime by scientific means which interest a large and intelligent class of readers. A quantity of gold, packed in boxes, was despatched by a railway train. On arrival at its destination, it was discovered that the gold had been stolen from some of the boxes, which were refilled with sand, to make up for the deficient weight. Measures were at once taken for the discovery of the thief; and that no chance might be lost, Professor Ehrenberg was requested to make a microscopic examination of the sand. The professor, who is a member of the Academy of Sciences at Berlin, well known for his researches into minute objects and his comparisons of volcanic dust from all parts of the world, asked that a quantity of sand from every station by which the train had passed should be sent to him. Examining these one after another, he at last came to a sand which was identical with that found in the gold boxes. The name of the station whence this sand had been collected was known: inquiries were set on foot at that station, and among the persons there employed, the thief was detected. The incident is one which an expert novel-writer might make use of with effect.

ENGLISH SONGS.

O MERRY sings the nurse by night,
Brooding over the fire;
And merry sing the sailor-boys
When noisy winds blow higher;
And red and merry in the blaze
Sing the men round the foundry fire.

O merry sing the reapers, sunk
Chin-deep in the yellow corn;
And merry sing the shepherds
When the shivering sheep are shorn;
And merry sing the millers
Watching the flowing corn.

Ay! merry sings the woodmen's gang
Where nods the stately tree;
And merry sings the pilot
By night on the summer sea;
And merry sing the fishermen
When winter gales blow free.

And merry sing the soldiers
In vaulted barrack-room;
And merry sing the weavers
Over the clattering loom;
And merry sing the light-house men
Amid the mirk and gloom.

But merriest far is my Lucy's song
To the infant at her breast,
Watching, with those Madonna eyes,
Our dear one hushed to rest,
What time the red light fades along
The bright line of the west.

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in which the case is stated; what Mr Sunnyside thought of it, and his Story; which calls up Mr Drumsich. But Mr Crasket is not convinced; and Mr Richards is induced to tell his Story, which Mr Watkins caps; and the Messrs Rooster, they tell their Aunt Sarah's Story, which satisfies Mr Crasket; thus the twelve are agreed; and all goes merry as marriage-bells.

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IN THE BOX.

By five P.M., we jury-men had had about enough of it. Bilkins, Q.C., had hammered the heads of his argument into us to that extent that our minds were covered with them, and such ideas as we had originally possessed were entirely obliterated. Then Serjeant Silkins had picked out, delicately, as with intellectual tweezers, all the nails that his adversary had thus driven home, and left our minds a blank with the holes in it. The juniors had done their worst upon us also. They had fluttered up and down, preening their gowns, perking up the little ends of their wigs, and reiterating their monotonous note of 'May it please your ludship,' like legal linnetts, and all, in comparison with what their leaders got, for crumbs. It was seven mortal hours since we had solemnly promised the Crier (though he seemed by no means greatly interested in the matter) that we would 'well and truly try and true deliverance make between our Sovereign Lady the Queen and the prisoner at the bar whom we should have in charge and a true verdict give according to the evidence;' it was seven mortal hours, I say, since he had counted us like sheep, and sworn us, and cried: 'O yez, O yez—if any man can inform my lords the Queen's justices the Queen's serjeant or the Queen's attorney or this inquest to be taken between our Sovereign Lady the Queen and the prisoner at the bar of any treason murder felony or other misdemeanour committed or done by him let them come forth and they shall be heard.' There were no stops in anything he said, and, to us, but very little meaning. We only knew, for certain—that the prisoner meet with whatsoever fate he might—that for us there was no escape from a protracted imprisonment. Some feeble efforts had been made by one or two of our number to evade the glorious privilege of sitting on a British Jury, but all had miserably failed. Poor Quiverful, the tailor, had ventured to stammer forth that there was a domestic incident, connected with Mrs Q., expected hourly at home, and that his mind was

altogether so pre-occupied with it as to incapacitate him from more logical considerations. But upon cross-examination by the clerk of the arraigns, the unfortunate man admitted that the above pretext had served him on two previous occasions already; and, covered with blushes, he took his seat in the fatal pen, confused and cross-legged. Drumpfich, an Italian warehouseman, in a town at the other end of the county, being of German descent, had absented himself, though summoned at the last assizes, on the ground of being a foreigner. But he was now made to serve along with us, notwithstanding that he had rubbed up his worst broken English to address the court in protest. The fatal inquiry of whether he had been Naturalised confirmed his sentence, and replying '*Ja wohl!*' aloud, he sank down by my side, with a muttered 'Done, by Jupiter'—a British juryman.

If Drumpfich had been the untutored alien he pretended to be, his brain would have been clearer than it was that day at five P.M., in the Assize Court of Dimblebury. What a relief to every one of us would have been half an hour or so of foreign and unintelligible eloquence, in the place of that of Bilkins or Silkins! Like a duplicate edition of the *Ancient Mariner*, each held us by his glittering eye, and double gold glasses, and we could not choose but listen. They had no thought of mercy—either of those learned gentlemen. They would have shot an albatross, and never felt a pang of remorse; or they would have cheerfully defended another man for doing it, upon the plea that it was not game.

I believe that the licence of uncontradicted speech is too great a power to be intrusted to any mere mortal, even though he be a clergyman. I have heard complaints made (in the strictest confidence) concerning the length of even pulpit oratory; but there are mitigations in church and chapel, which are not to be found in a Court of Justice. In a pew, in order, doubtless, more completely to abstract the mind for the due reception of what the preacher is inculcating, persons sometimes close their eyes, and are permitted to do so; but in the box the least repose is impossible. My fellow-juryman, Mr Mooney, a most respectable

person in the soap-and-candle line, accustomed to an early dinner and forty winks to follow, was as nearly as possible committed to prison, about three p.m., for falling asleep. When we retired to lunch, he had requested me, as foreman, to keep my eye upon him on our return, and to run my scarf-pin at once into his leg if I detected in him the slightest somnolence; but a disposition naturally humane had prevented my taking that extreme measure. He suddenly fell forward in the very face of Silkins, as that perfect gentleman was telling us we were the most intelligent, the most patient, and the most attentive body of men whom it had ever been his pleasure to address in a court of justice, and made his nose bleed against the front of the box. That bloodletting probably saved Mr Mooney from the degradation of going to jail, to which penalty the judge plainly told him he was richly entitled. It is my belief that a man of his habit of body could never, without some such relief to the system, have continued wide awake, under the circumstances, for so long a time as was yet before us. A close and crowded court, a summer noon, a quart of Allsopp recently imbibed, and the reiterations of Bilkins and Silkins, would have been too much for him, had he weighed far less than the eighteen stone he did. The whole Twelve of us were unfortunate in the fact that we were quite inexperienced in the jury business; we did not know how to husband our resources. The majority of us were so desperately attentive at first, that our wits gave way with the tension before the trial was half over. We took more voluminous notes than the judge himself. One of our number—Simperton, a homœopathic chemist—even went the length of trying to put a question to one of the witnesses, which his lordship declined to let him do, upon the ground of its total feebleness and irrelevance. We all considered that we were compromised by this act of Simperton's. We felt that the opinion of the legal linnet in respect to our intelligence sank from that moment lower than ever; their flattery was redoubled after the unfortunate incident, but we could not conceal from ourselves that the admiration they expressed was feigned.

The youthful barrister is, I am afraid, by profession a hypocrite. He smokes cigars, and reads novels, and writes for popular but light periodicals, all under the rose. He feels a just apprehension of his one client coming at any unexpected time into his chambers. He brings his clerk up in the principles and practice of dissimulation; and teaches him, when interrogated as to the whereabouts of his master, to call a billiard-room 'in court,' and to term Whist 'consultation.' It being thus with these young gentlemen in private life, one cannot expect much candour from them when professionally engaged. When they are *not* engaged, they go about with 'dummy' briefs, and a bag full of shavings, pretending that they are. When they preface a statement with 'I submit, my lud,' it is a sign that they are about to be as obstructive, cantankerous, and unsubmitive as they dare to be. I speak as a jurymen, and one who has suffered much at the hands of wiggled men. Bilkins, Q.C., for one, has done me an injury which I may forgive, but which it is not in my power to forget. I wish I could. The image of that eminent counsel remains indelible upon my mental retina in spite of myself. It glows and expands thereon (like something phosphorescent in the dark), whenever I

am the least unwell, and if I lie awake in the lonely watches of the night, and in my dreams: again he settles his gown upon his herculean shoulders; again he grasps that handkerchief with which he will now counterfeit emotion, and now mop his manly brow; again supporting his elbow on his left hand, he obtrusively projects the forefinger of his right towards the unhappy Twelve. You might imagine from his attitude that Bilkins, Q.C., was one of the most undemonstrative, quiet speakers that ever addressed a Court of Justice; but to carry out that illusion, you must have the great good-fortune to be stone deaf. Bilkins, Q.C., storms like Boreas. Mr Serjeant Silkins, on the other hand, whispers like the south wind, and indulges occasionally in tears, which nature has placed at his command in any quantity. This makes him invaluable for the defence. If Bilkins owes his forensic position to his Lungs, Silkins is equally indebted to his Lachrymal Ducts, which are always at full pressure. The Q.C. reminded us of our duty; of the sacred necessity of stifling the sentimental emotions, and casting them from our bosoms, for the more convenient reception of the Truth; of the paramount interests of justice, which we were in that box to further; and of a number of other things which, Heaven be thanked, this foreman has since forgotten. The Serjeant, on the contrary, giving as near an imitation as possible, in his own tones, of the still small voice of conscience, bade us remember that we were not only jurymen, but men; that we had not only intellects (of a very superior quality), but also hearts—loving hearts, to be influenced by the domestic affections [here he looked at Quiverful]; patriot hearts, that, amid the alien pines, panted for their country's vines [here he looked at Drumfich], and, in short [here he looked at us all], hearts of the most varied and admirable character, whose dictates it would be worse than idle—it would be criminal—to disobey. He had placed, he trusted, the innocence of the prisoner at the bar beyond all question; but if not—if there was a scintillation of doubt still lingering in the subtle brain of any one of us, let the prisoner have the benefit of that doubt. I would have more easily forgiven both these gentlemen, if they had said what they had to say, and then had done with it. But they returned to the same point again and again. Bilkins stormed in cyclones; the arguments of Silkins eddied in graceful curves, like doves around a dovecot. They were on Circuit with a vengeance. Not to listen, was impossible; but during their respective addresses, and while no witness was being turned inside out by either of them, I occasionally evaded their double eyeglasses and projected fore-fingers, by gazing upon my fellow-victims in the box. My own temperament is nervous to excess, and therefore I probably suffered more than they, but still I pitied them. They had elected me to be their foreman; unanimously, with the exception of one man, Daniel Crasket, and him I did not pity. Crasket (Jurymen No. 10) was by trade a corrugated iron merchant, and he looked like it, every inch of him. His narrow forehead was corrugated with iron wrinkles; so were his great splay hands; and so, I have little doubt, was his heart, if you could but have seen it. He did nothing throughout the proceedings but polish his iron head with his pocket-handkerchief, and sometimes scratch it, which, considering that it was as bald as a bell-handle, was quite inexcusable. He was excessively

nessy and impatient, and every time that he looked at his watch, he took an after-look at the prisoner, which seemed to say: Why make such a fuss about a person of so unimportant a position? Let the judge direct us to find him 'Guilty' at once.

Of Quiverful, Drumfich, Mooney, and Simperton, I have already spoken; I was personally acquainted with them all except the second. Young Sunnyside (Jurymen No. 11) was also slightly known to me; he was now a photographer in our town, but it was said that he had formerly been in better circumstances—a clerk in some government office in London, I think. If so, the reverses of fortune did not affect his spirits and good-nature; and whenever his neighbour Crasket scowled at the accused, he gave the poor fellow a glance also, which bore along with it a Recommendation to Mercy, at least. Behind Sunnyside sat Watkins, the great Dimplebury linen-draper, a teetotaler, a revivalist, and a believer in Turkish baths, but who managed to retain some customers of another sort by telling rather amusing anecdotes of his earlier life, when he was an unregenerate commercial traveller, for the great City house of Narrowwidth and Shortmeasure, which he invariably concluded with the remark: 'But there, I've done with all that sort of thing now.' The name of No. 5 was Winkard; somebody told me he was a miller, though he was no whiter than the rest of us—and not so white as Simperton after his ineffectual attempt at cross-examination—but I knew nothing of him; he seemed to be always on the point of exploding with laughter, of bursting with some unparalleled facetiousness; his eyes dilated, his cheeks swelled, he rolled his body about in humorous enjoyment, but I had only once heard him utter a remark; he had been perfectly silent while we lunched; but during the election of a foreman, when the question was mooted (by Crasket himself) as to whether he, Crasket, would not make a better foreman than I or any other man, Winkard had stood my friend; the matter being put to the vote, No. 5, I say, had broken silence in my favour; he had looked steadily at the corrugated iron merchant, and uttered these short but decisive words in a loud tone: 'Not him, at all events.' Nos. 6 and 7 were Bill and Bob Roosters, cousins, who managed a little dairy-farm in the neighbourhood; they had not been challenged, but unquestionably they ought never to have sat upon the same jury, for they had only one mind between them. What Bob thought, Bill thought, and *vice versa*. Yet it is probable that both together did not think so much as an average individual. After one or two laborious attempts at taking notes, which they transcribed from one another's papers alternately, they both betook themselves to eating their pens, during which repeat they got coincidentally choked, and were very nearly carried off simultaneously. Mr Richards, the only juror I have left unmentioned, had something better to chew than pens, and which kept him much quieter; he had been a seafaring man during some portion of his life, as a supercargo, and among other marine habits, he had retained that of distending his left cheek with a quid of tobacco. From this luxury it was evident that he derived the most intense enjoyment; the seven mortal hours of jury martyrdom might have been prolonged to seventy, I verily believe, for all that that retired supercargo cared. He sat, unmoved by the savage ravings of Bilkins, by the tender touches of Silkins, vegetative, imperturbable; only every

quarter of an hour, with almost the regularity of the court-house clock, he moved himself a little backward, made a clear space in front of him by dividing his legs, and silently expectorated.

These superficial characteristics of my companions I observed with interest, for besides doing a wholesale business in the dry-goods line, I am by profession a student of human nature. But let it not be supposed that I was occupied with these matters to the detriment of the important duties which, as Bilkins justly remarked (and repeated pretty often), I had 'been placed in that box to fulfil.' The prisoner and the witnesses had (and, I hope, enjoyed) each as full a share of my attention as I could possibly give them, embarrassed as it was by the Q.C. and the Serjeant, and the legal innuendoes. When all these wrangled together, like daws, as they sometimes did, the judge would considerably lean forward, and in a few simple sentences unravel the tangle of words, and restore to us jurymen once more the use of our aberrated intellects. It is through him alone that I am enabled now to reproduce the facts of the case upon which we were to pronounce our verdict. In his lucid and temperate charge, they were set forth with great distinctness; we read therein, as it were, by the clear light of noon, the whole story, which we had hitherto only fragmentarily perused by the lurid glare thrown on it by the fiery Bilkins, or the April haze, made up of tears and sunshine, cast around it by his pathetic rival. It has been more than once proposed—and Heaven send that it may be carried out before I am picked to serve again—to abolish trial by jury; would it not be a still further step in the right direction if we put a stop to Embarrassment by Counsel? The following, as nearly as I can recollect it, was

THE CASE BEFORE US.

Frederic Upton, labourer, 22, was indicted for stealing a five-pound note, the property of Richard Underedge.

Underedge was a carpenter in a large way of business, and the accused was one of his journeymen. They were far-away cousins; and in consequence of that relationship, they were naturally more intimate with one another than they would have been had their mutual positions been merely those of master and servant. They had lived in the same house for several years, and, except during the last twelve months, upon excellent terms; Upton being a remarkably skilful and diligent workman, of great assistance to the business, as well as well-conducted and respectful in his behaviour. About a year ago, however, Underedge had been greatly incensed by the discovery that his apprentice entertained feelings of affection for his daughter, Mary Underedge, which were reciprocated by her. He had been excessively violent at first, and threatened to turn Upton out of doors; but either in consideration of their affinity, and the friendliness of the lad, or of the loss which his business would suffer from the absence of so able a hand, he did not put that threat into execution. He had, however, extorted an oath from the girl that she would never marry without his (her father's) consent, and forbidden her to listen to the young man's addresses any more. He had also laid upon Upton an injunction of silence upon the forbidden topic for an entire year. By this, he had intended no encouragement

to his hopes whatever, but—'most unwarrantably,' said the judge—had assigned that definite period merely to secure the young man's services, which would probably have been otherwise withdrawn from him at once. He had also made a stipulation, that if Frederic Upton should have realised a certain sum by his own exertions at the end of the year, that he would permit the intimacy between his daughter and the journeyman to be recommenced; but the amount, which was to be earned out of business-hours, was so considerable, that he, Underedge, had held it tantamount to a total prohibition of the engagement. During the year in question, some proofs of ill-feeling had been manifested between Upton and his master, but no open rupture took place; at the end of the twelve months, however, Underedge was excessively annoyed by his apprentice producing the exact sum that had been stipulated for, and which he averred he had honestly acquired, and demanding the fulfilment of his master's promise. Among this money was a five-pound note, the property of Underedge himself, and which he now accused Frederic Upton of having feloniously stolen.

At the period of this discovery, the prosecutor had exhibited great bitterness, and some malicious triumph, which was severely commented upon by Mr Serjeant Silkins, who sought to suggest from it that the charge was altogether trumped up in order to ruin an ineligible suitor; and the forbearance and unwillingness with which Underedge now gave his evidence were dwelt upon as the tardy awakening of his conscience, shocked at last at the enormity of the wrong he had committed. The account-book in which the number of the note in question had been recorded, was closely scanned, with intent to shew the entry fictitious; and though the cross-examination failed, it is only fair to the learned counsel to say that it was not through over-delicacy in the imputation of motive. It was proved that the master-carpenter's accounts were so indifferently kept that he had not been conscious of any pecuniary loss. The fact, however, remained unshaken, that the stolen note was identical with the note in the possession of the prisoner at the bar. One Mr Morris, the mayor of the country town in which all the parties lived, corroborated Underedge's statement most completely; he had himself once possessed the note, and had given it to his son Francis, along with other monies, to discharge a large account he owed to the prosecutor. Morris the younger had started immediately afterwards on a tour in America, from which he had not returned; but there was not the least reason to doubt that he had paid that note to Underedge, as the master-carpenter stated, along with others whose numbers were correctly entered in the account-book. It was, of course, strongly urged for the Defence, that the idea of theft was monstrous, since we had the accused actually offering the supposed stolen property to the very man whom he had so recently robbed of it. Upton, however, had not laid it before him with his own hand; here came the pathos of the case, and the opportunity of Silkins; the supposed savings of Upton were exhibited by *Mary Underedge herself* to her father. The young man had confided to her his secret store, had exulted with her upon the acquisition of the very sum which was intended to be an insurmountable bar to their happiness, and upon some occasion, when her father had spoken contemptuously of her lover and his efforts, she

had gone straight to the hiding-place of this treasure, and triumphantly produced it, unknown to Upton, a few days before the expiration of the year—their term of probation. She therefore had been the unconscious instrument of her lover's ruin. During the examination of this interesting witness you might have heard a pin drop, had that circumstance occurred in Court. Even Mooney woke up, and breathed less stertorously; the supercargo suspended the process of suction, the better to listen to her low sweet voice; Bill and Bob Rooster winked at one another in the extremity of their mutual admiration of that young woman. The cruel Crasket nodded grim approval—because her evidence brought the possession of the stolen note directly home to the prisoner.

The girl herself seemed to be a second Jeanie Deans for honesty. She told the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but in such faltering tones, and with such tender and pitiful glances towards the prisoner, that the very judge was moved. The impressionable Quiverful became the slave of Silkins from the moment of her first appearance, when he sealed the indentures of his bondage with a tear. So far as feeling went, there was scarcely any one in court who did not hope for an acquittal. The prosecutor, as I have said, pressed the charge as lightly as the circumstances of the case permitted him to do; the expenses of the defence were understood to be defrayed by Mr Morris, whose evidence, next to that of Underedge, bore most hardly against the prisoner. This gentleman, as well as many others, gave Upton a most excellent character. They all entertained the highest opinion of his integrity. Many of them had employed him on various kinds of ornamental work on his own private account, and testified to having paid him such considerable sums of money as would have explained the possession of almost his entire savings. But with all this, there was no explanation of how the five-pound note in question had got into his hands. The prisoner himself would throw no light upon this subject whatever. Mr Serjeant Silkins wearied himself and us in suggesting ingenious solutions of this difficulty: but he confessed that he had no instructions. The prisoner, said he, was in his opinion as innocent of the crime imputed to him, as any of our own most honourable and upright body—to use the most emphatic and decisive language in his power—but he had committed a grievous wrong against himself (Serjeant Silkins) in refusing to intrust to him the true elucidation of the affair. His own humble efforts as an advocate were, moreover, impeded by the absence of Mr Francis Morris, who would doubtless have made the whole matter as clear to us as the noonday sun; he had been written to more than once, but the young man was of roving habits, and his address in America so uncertain, that it was doubtful whether he had ever received the letters; if he had, it was probable—nay, it was certain—that he was at the present moment speeding homeward, in hopes to be in time to tender his inestimable testimony: that very morning, the mail from America was expected in Liverpool, and he, Serjeant Silkins, should not be surprised, in case of our deliberations being at all protracted—in the event of our not obeying the dictates of our holiest emotions, and acquitting his injured client upon the spot—if, before we left the jury-room, that witness from the Western World beyond the Atlantic wave should arrive, and place

Frederic Upton's character upon a moral elevation loftier even than before.

All this, however, as Bilkins emphatically reminded us, was the merest assertion. Upton himself had declined, or, in other words, was unable to offer any statement which could exculpate him in the eyes of the Law—and therefore of us—from the heinous crime of which he stood accused.

The prisoner had pleaded 'Not Guilty' in a firm and audible voice, and after that appeared to pay little or no attention to the proceedings, except when Mary Underedge was giving her testimony; then indeed he grew painfully excited, watched her with looks in which love and pity struggled for the mastery, and when her examination was over, sighed, as it seemed to me, half with pain for her departure, half with pleasure that the cruel ordeal to which she had been subjected was concluded at last. Then he turned his gaze once more whither it had been steadfastly directed from the first—to the great door of the Court, and watched and watched.

If these remarks seem vague or unsubstantiated, I cannot help it. I have set them down exactly as they occurred to my own mind at the time. I was not moved by Silkins; I was not, I hope, driven into antagonism by Bilkins; but gradually I became more and more convinced of the innocence of the prisoner at the bar. I had sworn to be guided by the evidence, and by the evidence I had been guided; for testimony is not to be looked for in the witness-box alone, but even in the dock, and consists not in words only, but in tones and glances, in the nervous movement of a finger, in the catching of a breath—just as on the stage the by-play of a scene often lets the audience into a secret which cannot be gathered from the main dialogue or action.

I am convinced that the judge shared with me something of this belief in the prisoner's innocence from the excessive care with which he endeavoured to divest himself of any such leaning in his elaborate Charge. He summed up, as it seemed to me, with reluctance, decidedly against the accused, but added in conclusion: 'You will doubtless take time to consider your verdict, gentlemen, upon this remarkable case;' and so dismissed us from the box, at five P.M., when we retired, in various stages of collapse, to

THE JURY-ROOM.

The scene of our supposed deliberations was a long, low-roofed apartment, whose only window would have looked out into a little back-lane, if it had not been rendered opaque by the art of the glazier. The bare deal table, the twelve unpromising chairs, which the white-washed walls enclosed, resembled greatly the furniture of the 'public room' at a third-rate tavern; but at that point the parallel ended, since neither food nor drink was procurable. There was a bell, indeed, which rang immediately outside the door, but it produced no 'Waiter'—only a sarcastic, short-breathed personage, who called himself 'In charge,' and was not so much our body-servant as our jailer.

'Why on earth are we sent in here?' growled Crasket, pulling out an antediluvian watch, which seemed to have been constructed less for time than for eternity. 'My mind's made up. The thing's as clear as a pikestaff. What do you say, Mr Quiverful?'

'She's innocent,' replied that gentleman pathetically; and his mind perhaps reverting from the female witness to the matter that was being accomplished at his own home, he added—'as innocent, sir, as the unborn babe!'

'Drat the man, how his mind runs on women-folk,' observed the iron merchant savagely. 'I refer, sir, to the prisoner Upton. There can't be two opinions about *him*, I should think. Eh, Mr Rooster?'

The question was put to Mr Robert Rooster, who immediately looked at his cousin for information, who replied: 'There can't be two opinions, sir.'

'Of course there can't,' corroborated Bob.

'The judge himself said that the matter was quite straightforward,' continued Mr Crasket, upon whom the mantle, if not the silk gown, of Bilkins, Q.C., seemed suddenly to have fallen: 'the opinion of his lordship was that the whole question lay in a nutshell.'

'Lay in a nutshell!' reiterated Simperton, looking about him as if to see if it really did. 'Dear me.'

'Nay,' I objected, 'he only said it would have done so, had Mr Morris the younger been in court.'

'And not being in court, sir, we were instructed to treat him as though he had no existence,' returned the Corrugated stiffly. 'For my part, I doubt his existence. There is good legal authority for that, though I don't quote it, because it's in Latin.' And the speaker looked round in pity upon the unaccomplished eleven.

Now, there are some things which the very best of us can scarcely be expected to forgive, and perhaps at the top of them stands an imputation upon one's Latin. We were fairly rendered speechless with indignation: Drummich, a man of great classical attainments acquired at the celebrated university of Hohernbrittenjungern, was exceedingly annoyed: even Mr Winkard, who had up to this point enjoyed the conversation immensely after his peculiar fashion, ceased to ripple with satisfaction.

'It would do one all the good in the world to punch his head,' soliloquised Watkins in a whisper; 'and I would too, if I hadn't done with all them sort of things now.'

'Come, gentlemen, we are all agreed, I suppose,' continued Crasket with playful condescension, and mistaking our silence for submission. 'My dinner-hour is 6.30, and I daresay few of you dine later. What say you?'

'Well, I say that you are not our foreman,' remarked Winkard; 'leastways, unless a man can be his own proposer and seconder, and carry his own self *nem con*.'

The supercargo shifted his quid from the right cheek to the left—a very strong expression of feeling with him indeed—and expectorated approvingly.

'I do not wish unduly to bias any man,' observed I, 'but if you appeal to me, I feel a strong conviction of the prisoner's innocence.'

'His innocences!' exclaimed Crasket, corrugating all over like a caterpillar. 'Why, whoever heard of an innocent individual with a five-pound note, of which he could give no account, in his possession? Whoever heard of that?'

This was a difficulty the seriousness of which I felt as deeply as my enemy; I paused for a moment in irresolution as to the line of argument to be adopted, when an unexpected ally intervened.

'We have heard of it,' observed Mr William

Rooster, nodding to his cousin. 'Bob and I know of a very similar case that happened in our own family.'

'I am sorry to hear it,' returned Mr Crasket sarcastically; 'a fellow-feeling doubtless makes you kind. No relative of my own having been put upon his trial for felony, I feel in a position to do my duty unswayed by sentiment. I am ready at this moment—and I am not likely to change my opinion through staying here—to return a verdict in accordance with the evidence—Guilty.'

'But suppose the man isn't guilty after all?' observed the hesitating Simperton.

'That rests with us, sir,' rejoined the iron merchant contemptuously. 'If we bring him in Guilty, he is guilty.'

'If that is the case, and it rests with me,' observed Sunnyside cheerfully, 'Frederic Upton is "Not Guilty."'

A murmur of applause ran through the jury-room, not less decisive because it was inarticulate, save for Drumpfich's 'Gut, gut,' which he, moreover, accompanied with a soft clapping of his hands, as if at the play.

'My constitution is powerful,' exclaimed Crasket, looking contemptuously at the somewhat slightly-built foreigner; 'I can last without food for four-and-twenty hours without inconvenience.'

'Fortunate Briton,' returned Drumpfich admiringly; 'I have myself a stomach weak, although with a will of adamant. But I have chocolate—much chocolate in a small box here; ha, ha, we will see.'

'I am thankful to say that I can drop off to sleep at once,' quoth Mooney, 'whenever such a course may seem agreeable to the foreman of this jury. Time, therefore, is no sort of object to me.'

'More than one of us may have urgent calls at home,' remarked Crasket, looking at Quiverful with meaning.

'More than one!' exclaimed that victim to the domestic affections sharply, and awaking from what is termed a 'brown study'—'Good Heavens! Who said that there was more than one?'

'I do think,' urged I, 'that if we can hold out until after the train comes in from Liverpool to-morrow morning, which may possibly bring with it Mr Francis Morris'—

'The case is concluded,' interrupted the iron merchant decisively; 'his lordship distinctly stated that it must rest on grounds entirely independent of the arrival or non-arrival of any such person.'

'Still,' remarked Sunnyside alily, 'the doubts which some of us entertain of his existence would at least be put an end to, if he did arrive.'

'I don't know that,' returned Mr Crasket impatiently; 'I decline to speculate upon that question altogether. Let us deal with evidence only, and not with conjecture. One would really think that our adverse decision was about to hang this man. In the excessively improbable case of this hypothetical witness's arrival, and clearing the character of the prisoner, I say, even in the case of this Upton's innocence, why, what happens, although we should return a verdict—as we are most amply justified in doing—of Guilty? Is it a matter of life and death? or even of penal servitude? No. While what with the tenderness—I must say the absurd tenderness—of the prosecutor, and the general sentimental feeling in favour of the accused,

it is probable that the punishment awarded will not exceed a very few weeks' imprisonment—a mere nothing to a person in his condition in life—a catspaw.'

'Permit me to observe,' interrupted Sunnyside, with a gravity very unusual with him, 'that even a few weeks, nay, a few days' imprisonment, are no light matter to any man.'

'Perhaps you have experienced them yourself, sir,' replied the iron merchant scornfully.

'I have,' said Sunnyside.

'Upon my word, we have got some very strange people upon this jury,' whispered Crasket in my ear; 'it seems to have been framed upon the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief.'

'I have the fullest confidence in Mr Sunnyside's antecedents,' observed I aloud; 'and I should like to hear his story.'

'And I,' 'And I,' exclaimed several voices, while Mr Mooney, shutting his eyes, observed, with less enthusiasm, that for his part he 'didn't mind.'

'We are not put here to tell stories,' exclaimed the corrugated iron merchant with irritation; 'and, besides, I dislike stories above all things.'

'Nay,' said I, 'with respect to your first objection, if the tale has any bearing upon the important case under our consideration, it surely behoves us to hear it: you have affirmed that the punishment of imprisonment is so light that we need not hesitate to inflict it even upon one who may be innocent; Mr Sunnyside here affirms the contrary, and is prepared to prove it by the narration of a personal experience.'

'And as for Mr Crasket's second objection,' added Sunnyside, 'namely, that he dislikes a story above all things, that is perhaps only because he has never had enough of them. The Sultan Schahriar (of whom he much reminds me) was not so greatly enamoured of the earlier narratives of Scheherazade as he was of the later; and whereas he began to listen, a consort-strangling, imperious, and not-to-be-contradicted curmudgeon, he was transformed, before the entire series was concluded, into an easy-going, unsuspicious husband, of the sea-side-frequenting and novel-reading type.'

'Are you addressing those observations to me?' inquired Mr Crasket fiercely.

'Silence,' cried I, imitating the crier of the court which we had just left—'silence, if you please, gentlemen all, for

MR SUNNYSIDE'S STORY.

Which commenced as follows:

'No. 2 is taken at last, aunt!' I exclaimed, as I burst into the breakfast-room one morning.

'You are a day behind the fair with your news, Harry,' said my aunt quietly. 'They came yesterday afternoon—a fat foreigner and his wife, with a few paltry sticks of furniture that a broker wouldn't give ten pounds for. Pretty neighbours we have got at last! I must say that I detest foreigners.'

'Let us hope that the ghost of old Bobjoy will look after them, and frighten them away again at the end of the first quarter!'

'Mr Bobjoy was a very respectable man, Harry,' said my aunt with a little asperity; 'and I don't see why you should treat his memory with levity.'

'Why, you know, aunt, as well as I do, that ever since the poor old fellow was murdered—and that is now nearly five years ago—the house has had the reputation of being haunted; and that the landlord has tried in vain to get a tenant for it, though it's

the cheapest house anywhere about; and if that's not all owing to the ghost of the old bill-broker, I'm—

'Harry, be quiet!' interrupted my aunt. 'If you had been living here, as I was at the time that shocking event took place, you would never bear to hear it lightly alluded to. Mr Bobjoy may have been a miser, as some people said he was—that I know nothing about; he may have been a hard-dealing man in business-matters; but it was a terrible ending to a long life—to be found murdered in bed, and the hand that struck the foul blow never discovered. Mr Bobjoy and I were neighbours for a number of years, and I could not help feeling greatly shocked at his tragical end: but as for ghosts, Harry, neither you nor I believe in such rubbish.'

My aunt lived at No. 1 Laverock Villas; the fat foreigner had come to reside at No. 2; Nos. 1 and 2 comprised the whole of Laverock Villas. They were semi-detached; small in size, but strongly built; situated in one of the northern suburbs of London; standing by themselves in a little secluded lane that led out of one of the main roads, and having no other house within a quarter of a mile of them. In front of each of them was a considerable stretch of garden, through which ran a gravelled walk, leading to an open-work iron gate, which admitted you into the quiet lane. I was lodging with my aunt at that time, having come up to London about a year previously, a raw country lad of seventeen, to fill the post of supernumerary clerk in the Stamp and Wafer Office; and I considered that Fate, personified in the person of a stern and uncompromising uncle, had treated me very hardly indeed, in obliging me to give up my bat and fishing-rod, and free open-air life, for a pen and a ledger in a musty office in one of the busiest thoroughfares of London.

I think it was on the morning following that on which I discovered that No. 2 had at last found a tenant, that the postman dropped, by mistake, a letter into the box of No. 1, which was evidently intended for our new neighbour. It bore the Dover post-mark, and was addressed as under:

A MONSIEUR,

MONSIEUR EMILE PAPPIGNOL,

LAVEROCK VILLAS,

CLOSTJO HIGHGATE, LONDRES.

M. Pappignol was smoking a cigar as he paced slowly round his weed-covered garden; so I went out at once, and leaning over the wall, handed him the letter, explaining how it had come into my possession. M. Pappignol was overcome with confusion at a mistake which had caused me so much trouble; but, on second thoughts, the error was entirely redeemed in his eyes, since it had been the means of introducing to him a neighbour at once so amiable and obliging as myself—all poured out with amazing volubility and gesticulation, in very good English, marked only by a slight foreign accent. He was a stout, strongly-built little man, about forty years old; exceedingly active and supple, considering the amplitude of his proportions. He had short black stubby hair, which stood out in every direction; a large, round, closely-shaven face, blue-black in colour on that part of it operated upon by the razor; immense red ears, in each of which was pendent a small circlet of gold. An expression of benevolence and good-nature was lent to his face by the pair of large spectacles. We were still talking, when Madame Pappignol stepped lightly down the steps into the garden, and plucking a sprig of sweet-brier, and smelling it as she came, paced slowly down the walk towards us. M. Pappignol, taking off his black velvet smoking-cap, introduced Madame to me in the most gallant manner as a countrywoman of my own. Madame smiled a little superciliously, bent her

head slightly, muttered something about the fineness of the morning, and lounged away down the walk, smelling the sweet-brier as she went. A robust, well-built young woman, by my faith! with plenty of colour in her cheeks to match the poppies in her hair; with quick-glancing suspicious black eyes, shaded by thick black eyebrows; with a mouth hard and cruel in all its outlines; with large white carnivorous-looking teeth; dressed in thick rustling black silk; and wearing, even at that early hour of the day, a profusion of rings, and chains, and bracelets, lavishly displayed.

'Ma pauvre chère Marie!' said M. Pappignol tenderly, apostrophising his wife's retreating figure; 'you have got this morning by misfortune one of your bad pains of the head, which makes you feel triste and ill, and detracts in some measure from your usual charming manner!'

A few mornings later, as I was going City-ward on my way to the office, I heard myself accosted by name from the top of an omnibus, and on looking up, saw my foreign neighbour seated on the knifeboard, smoking one of his everlasting cigars. He signalled to me to get up beside him, and I complied. He was dressed for the day in a blue coat with brass buttons, fastened tightly across his expansive chest, and had on a hat with a very curly brim. In his white chubby hands, on which shone three or four valuable rings, he carried carefully a green gingham umbrella, faded and baggy, which he evidently regarded with considerable pride.

'Like yourself, I too am going to the City this morning,' said M. Pappignol, as he offered me a cigar. 'I am man of business to-day. I go to make a call on my banker. After leaving my banker, I shall go to Regent Street, for to-morrow will be Madame's *jour de fête*, and there I shall look out some pretty bagatelle, as a surprise for *ma petite*, when she rises from her couch in the morning. Then I shall return to my villa and my early dinner; after which Madame and I will play *écarté* till bedtime. *Voilà tout!*'

He laughed gaily, and hummed a little air, beating time with his umbrella on the roof of the 'bus. When we alighted at the Bank, I found it impossible to get rid of him till I had joined him over a *petit-verre* to the health of Madame at the nearest tavern.

It was shortly after this, I remember, that I was seized with a violent attack of toothache, which lasted, on and off, nearly a week, and allowed me scarcely any sleep for several nights. During one of those weary watches, as I was pacing backwards and forwards in my bedroom, with my hands pressed to my cheek, I heard a noise of wheels, distant at first, but momentarily coming nearer, and coming, too, up the quiet lane which led to the two villas. I had no light in my room, so I drew the blind on one side, and looked out. The night was clear and starlit, and presently I saw the dark outline of some advancing object, which next minute I recognised as that of an ordinary cab. It stopped opposite No. 2; but while it was still some distance off, M. Pappignol came out of his house, hastened down the garden, and opened the gate; even in the dark, he was easily recognisable by his bulk and his peculiar walk. Three men alighted from the cab; and the driver, apparently after a few words from M. Pappignol, turned, and drove back the way he had come; while M. Pappignol and the three strangers, two of whom were evidently laden with something either in a box or a bag, walked quickly and silently up the garden, and disappeared in the house. Mysterious, certainly, to say the least of it!

Utterly worn out with walking about my room, I sat down after a time on the window-sill, which was of the roomy old-fashioned kind; and the pain in my face being lulled in some measure by the cold, I lapsed after a while into a troubled sleep, which must have lasted for two or three hours, for when I opened

my eyes again, daylight was just beginning to break. While I was still looking out, I saw a figure glide down the gravelled walk of No. 2, open the gate, and disappear at a rapid pace down the lane. Ten minutes later, the proceeding was repeated by a second figure; and ten minutes later still, by a third. What could be the meaning of it all?

M. Pappignol was lounging over his garden-gate, enjoying his matutinal cigar, as rosy, as fresh, as smiling as ever, when I left the house that morning on my way to the office.

'Good-morning to you, Monsieur Sunnyside!' he said in his blandest tones, as I emerged from the gate of No. 1. 'Haie! haie! I regret to see that you suffer from something this morning. You do not look well.'

'It's the toothache, and be hanged to it!' I exclaimed petulantly.

'Madame suffers from the same malady then and now,' said Monsieur sentimentally. 'I feel for you, my dear young friend. My heart is touched. I am ashamed at myself to enjoy such great health while you suffer so much; but truly the air of these parks'—sweeping the horizon with the end of his cigar—'is so pure, so health-giving, that ever since I came here I eat like a horse, as you English say, and sleep like a top. Last night, for example, I go to bed as the clock strikes ten, and in less than five minutes I am fast asleep; and I sleep, sleep, sleep all night like a dormouse, and never awake till the clock strikes seven this morning. Ah! the air of these parks is truly fine!' and he slapped his expansive chest triumphantly, and bade me a smiling good-morning.

'Either Monsieur Pappignol has just told me a bare-faced lie,' I muttered to myself as I went on my way, 'or else what I saw during the night was a delusion of my own brain, and I only thought I saw it. Anyhow, it's no business of mine.'

When nearly a month had passed away, during which time I saw very little of our neighbours at No. 2, I happened to be invited by my friend Fred. Simpkins, who was in the same office with myself, to make one at his birthday-party. Although Fred. was three or four years older than me, we were great cronies; and as I was considered in those days to have a tolerable voice for a song, and had some knowledge of music, Fred. made a great point of my being there on the eventful occasion. I mentioned the matter to my aunt, and took the precaution to put the latch-key in my pocket, knowing that I should not reach home till some time in the small-hours of the morning. The party was a pleasant one; my voice was in good order; I sang my best songs; received my due meed of applause; partook of rather more wine than was good for me, as young men are in the habit of doing on such occasions; and set off towards home about two A.M., feeling perfectly satisfied with myself and all the world. My nearest way home was by a short-cut through the fields, which brought me, in about ten minutes, to the outside of the low wall which bounded the garden of No. 1 on the north. A leap, and a short scramble, landed me safely among the flower-beds. I was standing on the step of the front door, fumbling with my latch-key, trying, in a feeble-minded way, to find the keyhole, which seemed to have unaccountably vanished, when the sound of approaching wheels struck my ear, and the same moment there flashed across my memory the scene I had witnessed from my bedroom a few weeks before, and M. Pappignol's speech to me the following morning.

'Ha, ha! Pappignol, my boy,' I muttered to myself as I replaced the latch-key in my pocket, 'I'll see who your nocturnal visitors are this time, you stout old reprobate.'

Close to the wall that divided the two gardens, grew an ash-tree of considerable size, which, though it was now late autumn, still retained sufficient

foliage to effectually conceal any one—at least by that imperfect light—who might choose to perch himself among its branches. Towards this tree I made my way as speedily and as silently as I could, and two or three springs placed me safely among the branches, with my feet resting on the garden-wall. It was the freak of a young fellow who had imbibed rather too much wine, carried out on the impulse of the moment, and was a sort of proceeding which my sober everyday senses would certainly never have approved of. All this took very little time to accomplish, and the cab, or whatever it might be, was still some distance away; but as if the inmates of No. 2 had been on the watch for its arrival, the front-door was opened just as I had got fixed in my position, and M. Pappignol stepped lightly down into the garden, and hastened towards the gate; at the same instant I heard the rustle of Madame's dress as she stood in the doorway of the villa. I remember that it struck me as something singular that, so far as I could see, there was not a single light of any kind visible in No. 2—door and windows were alike dark. The cab had stopped by this time. M. Pappignol had the garden-gate ready opened. Three men got out as before; and after a few words from the Frenchman, the driver turned his cab, and went back the way he had come. The three men came leisurely up the pathway, passed close under me, and entered the house, two of them being laden with boxes or packages of some kind.

'Got some pretty gimcracks for you this time, mistress,' said one of the men in a low voice, evidently addressing Madame Pappignol.

'Have you?' she said with a little laugh. 'Why, I've almost got more already than I know what to do with. Been lucky this time?'

'More than ever, mistress—more than ever. There will be nice pickings for all of us. Ah, Mr Pappignol is a clever little chap, and no mistake!'

The clever little chap had lingered for a minute or two at the gate, apparently in order to hear the last of the cab; when all was silent again, he turned back towards the house. He had got within a yard or two of the tree in which I was hidden, when suddenly one of the bricks on which I was standing gave way, and slipped from under my feet, and in trying to save myself by clutching one of the branches of the tree, I fell head first to the ground just in front of the astonished Frenchman, and striking my forehead as I fell against a sharp piece of flint, felt a flash of fire shoot from my eyes through my brain, and knew nothing more.

On recovering my consciousness, I found myself in utter darkness, and thought for a moment or two that I was lying snugly in bed in my own little room in No. 1; but this illusion was of very brief duration, for I quickly discovered that I was still dressed, even to my overcoat, and that my bed consisted of nothing more than a heap of straw, with some coarse sacking thrown over it. The front of my shirt and my face were wet, and there was a dull aching pain across the front of my head; and putting up my hand, I felt a great gash in my forehead, from which the blood was still slowly oozing: at the same instant all the circumstances of the evening flashed across my mind, down to the moment in which I fell from the wall right across the path of M. Pappignol.

But where was I? A question not easy to answer. I rose to my feet, feeling very faint and dizzy, and stretching out my arms, advanced cautiously, step by step, like a blind man, till my hands encountered the rough dry surface of an unplastered brick wall. Guiding myself by this wall, I traversed in a minute or two completely round my dungeon, for by no other name could I call it. It was small in size, being, as nearly as I could judge, about ten yards long by six yards wide, and having but a single opening into it,

by means of an iron door at one end, now firmly closed, as I was not long in testing. When I had made these discoveries, I groped my way back to the heap of straw, and sat down on it to think. By whom had I been shut up there, and for what purpose? The Frenchman could hardly have done it; there was too much jovial good-nature about him for me readily to lay such a thing to his charge. Was there? Had I not from the very first a secret distrust of him—a half-felt conviction that his candour and good-nature were altogether assumed? But allowing all this, and even granting that I had surprised M. Pappignol in the transaction of some business which he evidently wished to be kept secret, still, where was there sufficient motive for an imprisonment so singular and cruel? To answer such a question as this, I had, of course, nothing but the merest conjecture; the great irrefragable fact, that I was a prisoner, still remained.

On putting my hand into my pockets, I found that they had been emptied; my watch, my purse, and even my penknife were gone. There might perhaps be some one within hearing, if so, it would be well to let them know that I had recovered my senses; so I groped my way to the door again, and putting my mouth to the keyhole, called aloud again and again with all my strength. But there was no answer; darkness and silence reigned supreme. Very sad and sick at heart, I crept back to my pallet, sat down on it, and resting my head between my hands, gave way to the bitter thoughts suggested by my situation; and so sat, hour after hour, with a sullen patience, waiting for the coming of I knew not whom.

At last a sound—after an age of waiting, as it seemed to me—as of some one unlocking a distant door; then I heard slow, heavy footsteps descending a flight of stairs; then a fringe of light shone under the door of my cell: the footsteps came nearer; the fringe grew brighter and broader; then the iron door was unlocked; another moment, and it was flung wide open, revealing the extensive figure of M. Pappignol completely blocking up the entrance. In one hand he carried a life-preserver, in the other he held aloft a small bronze lamp. I now saw him for the first time without his spectacles; with them had vanished that expression of candour and benevolence which I had never accepted as altogether genuine. The glance, at once sinister and malicious, which emanated from his large gray eyes, had much more of reality about it, and accorded far better with the expression of his other features.

I had time to glance round my dungeon, as well as my dazzled eyes would allow me, before the Frenchman leisurely removed his cigar and spoke. I found that my estimate as to the size of the place was tolerably correct. The roof was low and arched, and there was no window, nor any opening into it other than the door, which, as stated before, was of iron, and which I now saw had a number of small circular openings both at top and bottom, intended, probably, for the purpose of ventilation.

An iron door! I understood it all now. Soon after my arrival in London, when my aunt was telling me the story of Mr Bobjoy's murder, she mentioned, among other features of the case, that he had caused part of his cellar to be shut off by means of an iron door, so as to form a fireproof receptacle for the custody of the various important documents confided to his keeping by his clients and debtors. It was also said, I remember, that he always kept a large sum of money locked up here, which he used to come and gloat over at midnight, counting the yellow piles of sovereigns again and again. There was some comfort in the thought that I was so near home; that I was only divided by a couple of walls or so from my dear old aunt, who by this time was probably wondering and pondering over the unaccountable absence of her scapegrace nephew.

'Good-morning, my young friend,' said M.

Pappignol cheerfully. 'I hope that your new apartment is to your liking.'

'So little to my liking,' I replied, 'that I care not how soon I leave it.'

'Haie, haie! my dear infant, you are in a great hurry to be gone. I cannot afford to part with you so readily. You are my guest for the present, and are likely to be so for I know not how long a time.—Do you hear, my little one?' he added, turning to his wife, who had followed him noiselessly down stairs, and was now peering over his shoulder. 'Monsieur Sunnyside is already tired of our hospitality, ingrate that he is, and wishes to desert us!'

'Spy! eavesdropper!' hissed Madame from between her clenched teeth; 'lie here till you die like a cur, as you are. Undeceive yourself at once; here you are, and here you will stop for weeks—perhaps, for months—who knows for how long!'

'Softly, my Marie,' said M. Pappignol, laying his hand gently on his wife's arm; 'do not excite yourself, I pray you. The young man thought he would busy himself with the secrets of his neighbours, and behold the consequences.'

'Whatever your secrets may be, I know nothing of them,' I said. 'Nothing that I either saw or heard, were I ever so much inclined to injure you, would avail me for that purpose.'

'I know well that you could not injure me, were I to set you free this moment,' said the Frenchman with a sinister smile. 'Emile Pappignol is too much good citizen to be afraid of that. Still, you might perhaps talk, and it is better to keep you shut up here for the present. Say, is it not so, *ma Marie*?'

'You are right, Emile, as you always are.'

Indignant and stung to the quick though I was, I was far too weak and ill to offer any resistance, or make any effort to force my passage out, which, indeed, under the circumstances, would have been simply madness; I could do nothing but submit for the time.

M. Pappignol paused for a moment to kiss the hand of Madame, and then turned to me again, and resumed in a gayer tone: 'Besides—it is agreeable to the romance of my feelings to have a prisoner in my dungeon—a second Baron Trenck, another Monsieur Latude, without the genius of those eminent men for breaking out. I feel like a seigneur of the *moyen age*; my villa expands into a castle; I think seriously of buying a suit of armour.—The fanciful extravagance of an infant, you perhaps think. Be it so—I am an infant in everything but size and age.'

He paused to light a fresh cigar at the lamp. 'Seriously, my young friend,' he resumed, 'I am too tender-hearted, too much good chicken, not to treat you well, provided you remain here quietly till it is convenient for me to open your prison-door; but try to escape, and my little sweetheart here, tapping the butt-end of a pistol which peeped out of the folds of his waistcoat, will look carefully after you, and give you something as a souvenir of Emile Pappignol! *Allons, ma Marie*; breakfast is waiting for us.'

'You will at least give me a light and some water?'

I said.

'A little patience, *mon ami*, and your wants shall have attention.'

An hour or two later, a surly Frenchman, in a blouse and cap, whom I never remembered having seen before, brought me some breakfast, and while I was eating it, fetched me soap, water, and towel; some court-plaster for my head, and a large empty box to use as a table; and, greatest blessing of all, left me the lamp when he went away, for I felt as though I must have gone mad had I been left to brood much longer in that horrible darkness. He visited me again, towards evening, I suppose, bringing me not only something to eat, but a blanket and a large rug as a protection from the cold; then, having trimmed the lamp, he left me for the night. All my efforts to

draw him into conversation were fruitless; all that I could get out of him was a single sentence in guttural French, repeated again and again: 'Monsieur, one is forbidden to speak here.' Further than that, he was resolutely dumb. As far as I could judge, he was entirely unarmed when he came to visit me, but he was invariably accompanied by a large and savage dog, which squatted itself gravely on its haunches close to the door, and regarded me with a distrustful eye, evidently only waiting for the proper signal from its master to fly at my throat and drag me to the ground.

The villa was well built, with thick walls, and substantial floors, and plenty of solid brickwork about it, so that but few sounds, and those very faint ones, ever penetrated the depths of my dungeon; indeed, long spaces of time often passed, during which I sat on my pallet, or paced wearily round my cell, so cut off from even the faintest sounds of external life, that I might have been buried alive in the heart of the great pyramid, for anything I could have told to the contrary. Fortunately for me, my dungeon received an adequate supply of fresh air through the circular openings I have already mentioned, the main body of the cellar being supplied through a grating in one of the outer walls of the villa, whence I got it at second-hand, but tolerably pure.

Twice every twenty-four hours, I was visited by the surly Frenchman; M. Pappignol, too, came for two or three minutes each day, to satisfy himself, I suppose, that everything was right. He called me his dear Silvio Pellico, his edition of Baron Trenck bound in calf, and gave free vent to his sardonic humour: he was like a fat Mephistopheles, jesting and mocking at everything and every one, himself included. Madame came with him sometimes, but after that first visit she rarely spoke to me, but stood, cold, silent, and disdainful, by the side of her husband, till he was ready to return to the upper regions again.

It was either on the fourth or fifth day of my imprisonment, I cannot be certain which, that an unusual commotion overhead, which reached even the depths of my cell, fell on my ears, and I sat listening to it for some time, wondering vaguely whether it would result in any change of condition to myself. After a time, I heard the upper door opened, then a light footstep, and the rustle of a dress, and I knew that Madame was coming to visit me. Next moment, I heard her at the door.

'Hist! hist! Mr Sunnyside, are you awake?' she said.

'I am here,' I replied, approaching the door. 'What do you want?'

'We are going to leave this house, all of us, and at once,' she said. 'I have here the key of your cell. I will give it you on two conditions: the first is, that you will not make use of it for a full hour after I leave you; the second is, that when you are free, you will not tell any one where you have been, nor anything you have either seen or heard in this house. Promise this on the word of a gentleman, and you shall have the key.'

I hesitated a moment. To forego all idea of vengeance, to give up every hope of bringing Pappignol to account, was not pleasant to me just then. But, on the other hand, were I to refuse the proffered terms, I fully believed Pappignol to be capable of leaving me locked up to die of starvation. My desire for revenge was not quite powerful enough to induce me to run the risk of a fate so terrible.

'Decide, and quickly,' said Madame impatiently; 'I cannot wait here any longer.'

'I agree to your terms,' I said.

'On the word of a gentleman?'

'On the word of a gentleman.'

'Good. Here is the key,' and she pushed it under the door. 'Farewell, and a speedy deliverance to you!' and with her little metallic laugh, she hurried back up stairs.

In a few minutes, the commotion overhead ceased; I heard a distant door clash violently, and then all was still.

An hour to wait—only a single hour, and then I should be free! I hugged the key; I pressed it to my lips; I laughed aloud in my happiness; and then I believe I cried a little; but they were tears of joy that I should so soon quit that dark dungeon for ever; so soon see again the blessed daylight, and mingle among my fellow-men. My dear old aunt, too, how surprised and delighted she would be to see me! She must have given me up before now as lost or dead. It would seem like a resuscitation from the tomb.

Terribly long seemed that hour during which I waited with the means of freedom in my hand. I had no watch, or any means of measuring the time correctly; but after the first ecstasy of my thankfulness had in some measure subsided, I set myself to walk slowly from end to end of my cell for a fixed number of times, which I knew would more than fill up the remainder of the hour; for having given my word, I was determined rather to exceed than fall short of the appointed time. So to and fro I slowly paced, keeping the key clasped firmly in my hands, knowing minute by minute that the allotted number was decreasing, dwindling slowly but surely till one by one they were all gone. Then, with a great sigh of relief that the moment of my deliverance was at last come, I inserted the key in the lock, and gave it the usual turn; but it would not touch the bolt; again I tried, and with a similar result. *It was the wrong key!*

When I had ascertained beyond doubt, and by trying again and again, that such was really the case, I staggered back to my pallet like a man mortally stricken. All my courage, all my strength went from me in a moment; I sank down on my knees, and burst into an agony of tears like any child. All hope of release was over; a lingering death from hunger and cold, undergone in darkness and solitude, such was the ghastly prospect which now stared me in the face.

I did not doubt for a moment that Madame had given me the wrong key by accident, not by design. Days might elapse before she discovered the mistake; probably she would never discover it; but even supposing that she did find out the error she had committed, there might be twenty reasons, any one of which would render it impossible to come back merely for the purpose of liberating me. It was true I had the means of prolonging my misery for a short time, having by me several portions of French rolls more or less stale and hard, together with a bunch or two of raisins saved from some previous meals; the earthen pipkin in the corner, too, was half full of water. The lamp would probably burn for eight or ten hours longer, but I was without the means of renewing it. Long, sad, and bitter were my thoughts, as, crouched in a corner of my cell, I brooded over my fate.

I was roused by a perceptible waning of the flame of the lamp to the necessity of making an effort of some kind for my deliverance. But what, in truth, could I do? Nothing—nothing! I could only strive my best to bear the inevitable doom, which was marching with such fearful strides towards me, as calmly, as bravely, as cheerfully as in me lay. What bright pictures of that country home, never more to be seen by me, formed themselves in the yellow nimbus of the flame, as I sat with fascinated eyes watching it slowly dying! They would never know my fate, perhaps, those dear ones; they would think I had gone away of my own free-will without parting word or message; they would look for my return month by month, year by year, till all who knew me died one after another, and a new generation grew up, in whose memory my name would have no dwelling.

But stay, stay, stay! what thought was that—nay,

not a thought, say rather a flash of inspiration, Heaven-born—which shot through my brain a moment ago, and sent the hot blood surging through my veins, and made my heart leap wildly, as though it would burst its bounds! I started up, and seizing the lamp, examined it eagerly and carefully. It was made of iron, in rude imitation of some antique model, and was both heavy and clumsy. The body of the lamp formed a long narrow trough or saucer, with a small handle at one end; an iron cup in the middle held the oil and wick. This cup I now proceeded to unscrew from the body of the lamp, and the latter was then left in my hand, a blunt iron instrument, not unlike a hollowed mason's trowel in appearance. Having realised so much fact out of my moment of inspiration, my next proceeding was to examine minutely the walls of my cell, sounding each of them carefully with my trowel, and trying to find some weak spot where the plaster had given way, or a brick was loose; but in vain; they were all, so far as I could judge, in excellent condition, and without crack or defect of any kind. The lamp was waning perceptibly; I determined to waste no more precious time on a futile examination of the walls, but to set to work at once to carry out the plan I had conceived, which was indeed the only one that seemed to offer even the remotest chance of liberty and life. My plan, in brief, was this: to hew my way, inch by inch, with the help of my trowel, through the brick wall which divided my cell from the main body of the cellar. I judged that this wall would be much thinner, and more loosely constructed than the outer walls of the villa, and could I only succeed in breaking through it, I knew that I could easily make my way out of the cellar, either by way of the grating in the wall, or through the wooden door at the top of the stairs.

I set to work at once, at the likeliest spot I could think of, to pick out the plaster from between the bricks, preparatory to commencing on the bricks themselves. I laboured on hard and fast for about twenty minutes, and then paused for a while to relieve my aching arms, all unused to such labour. As I stood resting my back against the door, my attention was attracted to two bricks in the wall directly opposite me, which looked by that light much darker and yellower than any of the others, as though they were discoloured by damp. I crossed over to examine them more minutely, hoping to find them somewhat softer than the other bricks, and therefore more easily assailable; but on striking them with my trowel, they sounded as hard and firm as the rest. Still, there was something peculiar about them, something very peculiar indeed, for on pushing one of them with my thumb, it yielded to the pressure, sinking into the wall, and at the same instant one of the square flags close to my feet fell in like a trap-door, disclosing an opening in the floor large enough for a person of ordinary size to pass through.

I pushed the second brick, and the flag resumed its place in the floor. I had walked over it a thousand times, never dreaming of the black cavity below.

I stood like one paralysed; it was a discovery that literally took my breath away for a time. What if it were the entrance to some secret passage, through which, if penetrated, I might regain my freedom?

At this juncture, the lamp, which had been gradually waning for the last hour, flared up suddenly for an instant, and then sank into darkness. What a misfortune to be left without light at the moment of making such a discovery! It would be easy enough to find the bricks again, and so open the trap; the ugly part of the business would be to venture into the opening without a light, knowing neither how deep it was, nor whither it might lead me. What ought I to do? Which would be the wiser plan—to go on labouring in the dark, till by slow and painful degrees I had knocked

a hole in the wall large enough to squeeze myself through; or to open the trap, and venture into its mysterious depths, trusting to my good-fortune to find that way a means of exit from the villa?

I was still debating this question with myself, when the silence was broken by a faint noise up stairs, which sounded like the opening of a distant door. With my head bent down to the keyhole, I listened intently. I was not kept long in suspense. The door at the top of the cellar stairs was quickly opened, and the same instant I heard the loud confident voice of M. Pappignol. I had sufficient presence of mind to screw the cup of the lamp into its place, and to spread a few handfuls of straw over the fragments of plaster on the floor, when the door of my dungeon was opened, and M. Pappignol presented himself, carrying a candle in one hand; followed by his wife, the surly Frenchman, and the dog.

'How does my young friend find himself this fine morning?' asked M. Pappignol with a sardonic smile. 'He did not expect to see his friends back again quite so soon, eh? We have been on a little tour, have we not, chère Marie? have we not, Pierre Leblanc?—a little journey of pleasure, which lasted from six o'clock yesterday evening till ten this morning, and Monsieur here has been good enough to keep the house for us while we were away. Monsieur seems quite happy in the retirement of his *salon*, does he not? Let me assure him for you, Marie, so that he may do justice to your excellent disposition, that when you left a certain key with him yesterday evening, you thought in good faith that it was the key of this door, and that not till some hours afterwards did you discover the mistake you had made. It was fortunate for us, my little one, that you gave him the wrong key; otherwise, we should hardly have come back here this morning—hardly have had the pleasure of retaining Monsieur as a guest under our humble roof for a short time longer. Leblanc, you will continue to act as the valet of Monsieur. And now, my child, let us go and partake of some refreshment.'

After one quick glance upward as the door of my cell was opened, I neither looked at nor spoke to my visitors, but sat as silent and unmoved as though I had been alone, with my elbows on my knees, and my head resting between my hands. Truth to tell, I was afraid to look M. Pappignol fairly in the face—afraid lest those sharp eyes of his should see in mine the glad light of hope which I felt was shining through them, and his suspicions be thereby aroused to watch me more closely, or visit me more frequently, and so cut off all chance of escape.

'Cannot you let him go, Emile?' I heard Madame say in a low voice, just as her husband was closing the door. 'Cannot you take his word of honour to keep silent, and let him go? Such an imprisonment is enough to drive him mad.'

'No, no, no—a thousand times no!' answered the Frenchman with savage energy. 'Let him go, my faith, at such a moment as the present, when a word from him would bring the whole business about our ears! It was different last night, when we never expected to come back; I must either have let him go then, or left him to starve. But now that we are back again, here he must stay till this little affair is over, and till, as you sing, "the swallows have fled o'er the sea."'

He turned the key as he spoke the last word, and I was left once more to darkness and solitude; but not for long; half an hour later, Leblanc came in with some coffee, and with oil and cotton for the lamp. He did not stay long; and when he was gone, I knew that I should be free from intrusion for several hours. I was burning to penetrate the secret of the trap-door. The coffee had refreshed and strengthened me, and I felt equal to any adventure.

I pushed the brick as before, and the door fell back

on noiseless hinges; holding the lamp in my hand, I peered into the cavity, and saw a flight of steps about a dozen in number. Down these steps I quickly descended, still carrying the lamp; and on reaching the bottom, found myself at the entrance to a narrow passage leading away at a right angle from the steps. Pursuing this passage for about a dozen or fifteen yards, I came to another flight of steps, much steeper and narrower than the first. Up these steps I went very slowly and quietly. There were a great number of them, perhaps thirty in all; but they ended at last opposite a small square iron-bound door, let perpendicularly into the wall, having two small brass knobs in the centre of it. Before venturing to open this door, it was well to consider what might be the result of such a step. I might perhaps find myself in the sitting-room or bedchamber of M. Pappignol—perhaps face to face with the wily Frenchman himself, the thing of all others which I most desired to avoid. Still, it was imperatively necessary, in order to render my discovery of any service, that I should open the door, either now or at some future time. Would it not, then, be well to wait and listen? If there were really any one in the room on the other side of the door, some movement on their part must sooner or later betray them. So I put my lamp down gently on one of the steps, and putting my ear close to the iron door, listened with straining nerves and bated breath, minute after minute, for I know not how long. But the silence was unbroken by even the faintest sound. Gathering courage at length, I gently pressed one of the brass knobs, and as I did so, I heard the shooting of a bolt, and the same moment the door fell slowly back, letting in a flood of brilliant sunshine, which dazzled my eyes, weakened by long absence from daylight, and blinded me for a minute or two, till a few happy tears came to my relief.

I found myself, when I could look round, at the entrance to a small room, now empty, with the exception of a litter of empty boxes in one corner. It was panelled from ceiling to floor with some dark wood, and it was one of these panels which formed the entrance to the secret flight of stairs. This room had doubtless been the sanctum of old Bobjoy. By means of the secret staircase, he would be able to visit his concealed treasure whenever he pleased, without any one in the lower part of the house—for the room was on the second story—being aware of the fact. It would serve, too, as a way of escape in case of fire, should all other means of rescue be cut off; and Bobjoy, I knew, had been possessed by an almost superstitious dread of that element.

I stepped out into the room. There was but one window in it, which opened into the garden in front of the villa. On looking through this window, I saw M. Pappignol quietly smoking his cigar, as he strolled calmly up and down the gravelled walk, and drew back at once, for fear he should discern my pale face through the glass. Opposite this window was a door; I crossed the floor on tiptoes, and listened at it for full five minutes. Silence everywhere. I then gently turned the handle, but found that it was locked on the other side. It was evident, therefore, that if I were to escape at all it must be by the window. How was it to be done? Easily—easily. Among the lumber and empty boxes piled in one corner of the room, was a coil of stout rope, which had probably been used for packing purposes; all, therefore, that I had to do was to fasten one end of this rope to a bar of the empty grate, and let the other end drop through the window, then slide down it to the ground, and I should be free. But to carry out this plan successfully, I must wait till nightfall; it would not do to make the attempt by daylight, and run the risk of being pinned by Leblanc's savage dog as I reached the ground.

Reluctantly, therefore, but still glad at heart, I retired to my cell by the way I had come, first

securing the coil of rope, for fear it should be taken away before I needed it. All day I waited with as much patience as I could summon to my aid. Leblanc came at nightfall as usual. After his visit, I waited for about three hours longer, which would bring the time, as nearly as I could judge, to about midnight. I then opened the trap as before, closing it behind me this time, and two minutes later, found myself in the panelled room, into which a young moon was brightly shining. It was a work requiring both time and dexterity to open the window without alarming the inmates of the house, but it was accomplished at last; then the rope was fastened to the grate, the other end thrown out of the window, and, creeping through after it, I slid down, sailor-fashion, and came safely to the ground.

Before daylight next morning, M. Pappignol, his wife, Leblanc, and two other confederates, who happened to be in the villa at the time, were all safely lodged in the nearest police-station.

The heart of Leblanc failed him before the day of trial; he turned evidence for the crown, and gratified an inquisitive public by revealing all that he knew of the history and antecedents of M. Pappignol. From this confession, it would appear that Leblanc's quondam patron and employer was born in London, of French parents, his father being a scene-painter at one of the theatres. Thrown on the world by the death of both parents, at the age of fourteen, the young Emile, with wits prematurely sharpened, and an inborn distaste for work, went rapidly to the bad; and before he had been his own master more than six months, was convicted of pocket-picking, and underwent a short term of imprisonment, with, to his great disgust, an accompaniment of hard labour. Thinking, after this experience, that a change of scene was desirable, he turned up next in the house of a relative in France, where he seems to have lived quietly and honestly for two or three years. But the taint was in his blood; he could not rest. He had heard much of Paris, and determined to see it; so he set off one night for the gay capital, taking with him all his uncle's hard-earned savings. His career for the next twenty years was that of a man at war with society; living by his depredations; rich one day, a beggar the next; hunted from place to place; never feeling sure when he lay down to rest that he might not be awakened by the tap of Justice on his shoulder. From Paris, he went to Marseille, thence to Lyon, and took in turn all the chief towns of France and Belgium, till finally finding both countries too hot to hold him any longer, he determined to return to the land of his birth. No sooner had he landed in England than he set to work, in conjunction with two French confederates and some London thieves, to organise an ingenious and audacious system of robbery, not of private houses, but of jewellers' shops. M. Pappignol himself stood far too high in his profession to condescend to the merely mechanical part of the task; it was his duty to gather up, with laborious accuracy, the necessary details, only to be arrived at by frequent visits in the guise of a customer to the shop selected; to organise the whole affair; to arrange the part which each individual was to play in the little drama; to give his subordinates their instructions, and leave them to do the rest; taking himself a minimum of risk, and the lion's share of the plunder. Two successful and highly lucrative robberies, following within a few weeks of each other, had already attested the soundness of M. Pappignol's method of working; and a third scheme was on the carpet, when his career was brought to a sudden and ignominious end.

To explain the sudden flight of the roguish fraternity from the villa, and their triumphant return the following morning, it is only necessary to state that M. Pappignol, who was an assiduous newspaper reader,

finding in his evening edition an account of a cab-driver who had been examined that morning before a magistrate on suspicion of being concerned in the recent jewellery robberies, took the alarm, and resolved to decamp at once, never doubting that the man in question was the veritable cab-driver whom he had employed, and who was in reality a confederate. In the course of the evening, however, his emissaries brought him word that the man taken was an entire stranger to all of them, and that their own driver was still a free man.

I have nothing to add except that justice meted out due punishment to Pappignol and his gang, and, in a milder degree, to Madame also.

Laverock Villas were pulled down three summers ago, and a new street of glaring stuccoed houses built right across the site of them. The green fields have vanished for ever; and the whole district now forms one of those suburban elysiums, whither our toiling bees love to retire when their day's labour in the City is done.

A murmur of approbation filled the jury-room when Mr Sunnyside had finished his narration.

'Well,' remarked Mr Mooney, 'that must have been a good 'un, to have kept me awake from first to last as it did; the general effect of stories of any kind being to make me feel as if I was between the sheets. That certainly was a story and a half that was, was it not, Mr Crasket?'

'Sir,' responded the iron merchant stiffly, 'if you mean that the narrative with which we have just been favoured was half as long again as it ought to be, I sympathise with you deeply.'

'Why, goodness gracious, Mr Crasket, you can't mean that,' expostulated Simperton; 'why, I wish it had been twice as long. I got so frightened with that 'ere Pappignol, that if you had given me nitre on a lump of sugar I couldn't have perspired more freely.'

'You are evidently not much acquainted with literature,' returned Mr Crasket contemptuously; 'otherwise, you would know that Mr Pappignol is a fictitious character, the offspring of Mr Sunnyside's imagination: nay, rather he is merely a servile imitation of Mr Wilkie Collins's *Count Fosco*.'

'Oh, indeed sir!' said Mr Simperton humbly. 'But still, how dreadful were the incidents; how terrible it must be to be locked up even for a few days and nights; and then that Mrs Pappignol—why, she was more wicked than her husband.'

'All foreigners are bad, and foreign women worse,' remarked the iron merchant sententiously.

'Nay, Mr Crasket, not so,' ejaculated Drumfich. 'It is neither courteous nor correct to speak so. I could tell you a true tale which would disprove that slander.'

'Pray, tell us, Mr Drumfich,' urged I, touched by the mild remonstrance of the insulted foreigner.

'Pray, don't, sir!' exclaimed Crasket, almost with politeness: 'sooner than trouble you to do anything of the sort, I will withdraw my observation.'

'Nay, sir,' said Drumfich firmly, 'but you cannot withdraw the effect it may have produced upon these gentlemen here. I am the only foreigner in this room; I owe it therefore to my fellow-countrywomen to relate the narrative in question.'

'Certainly,' observed I gravely, 'it is without doubt that he owes it to his fellow-countrywomen: let us have silence for

Karlsruhe, as you know, is the capital of the grand duchy of Baden; it stands in the plain of the Haardwald or Stag-forest; and it had its name from the Margrave Karl Wilhelm, who, in 1715, there built himself a lodge, where he might rest from his hunting. Around that hunting-box, which gradually grew to the dimensions of a palace, rose little by little a town, whereof the houses were all at first of wood. Brick is daily displacing the wooden tenements; but in the early days of Karlsruhe, even the grand-ducal palace was of that humble material. It was in one of the old-fashioned wooden houses that Herr Karl Tannhäuser and his two daughters lived; for Anna had an elder sister, Adelaida. Now, Adelaida was at this time eighteen years old. She resembled no particular heathen goddess; she had neither the large eyes of Here, nor the piercing eyes of Athene, nor the laughing eyes of Aphrodite, but she had exactly the eyes that Hermann von Adelmann liked. Her form put no one at all in mind of Hebe, but there was none that Hermann was better pleased to encircle in the waltz. Her feet were small, and so were her hands; the latter, moreover, had fingers like those of Eos; and such was the magic of their touch upon a pianoforte, that all Karlsruhe wondered. Besides, she dispensed the simple hospitality of her father's house with a grace that charmed the lucky guest; and she displayed towards her aging father himself a sweet commingling of deference and tenderness, that bore witness to her sense as well as to her affection. Her younger sister she preferred to herself—that was evident to all beholders; and her younger sister returned the preference. This should have been a happy family; and happy it was when Hermann von Adelmann wooed Adelaida. Hermann was of good family, and of tolerable fortune, and held an appointment in the grand-ducal household. Herr Tannhäuser played first violin at the Karlsruhe theatre, and gave lessons in music and singing; but forasmuch as in Germany talent is considered by no means vulgar or ignoble, and music holds towards other professions much the same position that poetry holds towards prose, he was rather looked up to than looked down upon, and the well-born Hermann felt honoured by his acquaintance. So Hermann and Adelaida met and loved. The secret of each had been made known to the other, and the moon had witnessed the plighting of their troth one happy night as they walked home from the forest a few weeks before the date of our story.

'But we must wait till dear Aennchen has made her début,' Adelaida had said. 'The dear father, I know, will give his consent; but I cannot leave Aennchen till her trial is over.'

'And when,' Hermann had replied, rather disconsolately, 'does your father intend to bring Aennchen out?'

'Certainly not for a year at the least: you know, dear Hermann, she is only sixteen, and seventeen will be sufficiently early.'

Adelaida had prophesied rightly of her father; he gave his consent willingly, for he loved Hermann well; but the marriage was to be delayed till Aennchen had made her grand début at Vienna, or some other great capital. In six months, she was to appear on the boards at Karlsruhe. Of her success there, Herr Tannhäuser had no doubts, for already, in so small a city, her fame had gone abroad; and in six months after her appearance at Karlsruhe, she was to face the fashionable, critical, capricious audience of Vienna, or Paris, or London.

'Then, my son,' said he to Hermann, 'my Aennchen will know her fate; whether our sweet Blackbird is a match for the famous Nightingale, or whether she must retire altogether from the contest: then your marriage will be to us either the celebration of our success, or the consolation for our failure.'

Hermann was fain to acquiesce.

MR DRUMFICH'S STORY.

The date is 18—; the place Karlsruhe; the name of her who is no more was Anna Tannhäuser.

Anna Tannhäuser, or, as her family affectionately called her, Aennchen, had from her earliest years been a marvel to all for her wonderful voice. Her mother had died some years before, but not without prophesying Aennchen's success, and on her death-bed she exacted from her husband a promise that he would spare no pains to make their little daughter the first songstress of Europe.

And truly Nature had been gracious to her.

At five years old, she would wander with her mother or her nurse in the forest, and imitate the notes of birds till all who heard her marvelled at her. The feathered *prime donne* themselves would peer down from branch and twig, toss up their beaks amazed, ruffle their plumage offended, and finally, feeling upon their mettle, pour forth defiant carols. At ten years old, she could sing from note, and her natural shake was perfect; and as she grew in years, she grew not only in vocal excellence, but in those external charms without which it is doubtful whether Calliope herself would win favour from certain audiences. Yet she was not beautiful, she was not even pretty; but a high pure soul beamed through her face; the *pose* of her head was elegance itself; her hair was golden-tinted; her figure would have vexed Atalanta, and her arms would have angered Here. Her voice was the common care and common anxiety of Herr Tannhäuser and Adelaida: he attended laboriously to its culture, she to its rest and preservation. 'Aennchen,' she would remonstrate, 'you really must not sing any more,' when a too complimentary visitor would have had her repeat for the third time some difficult passage; for, as has been said, the fame of Aennchen's voice had gone forth into all Karlsruhe, and the inhabitants called her *die Amsel*, or the Blackbird; and of the many who visited Herr Tannhäuser, three-quarters, one might say (who cared to be on the right side of truth), came solely to hear the Blackbird warble. They inquired earnestly after the health of the old gentleman, with one eye on the piano, and they combined their questions as to the well-being of the two sisters with a request to be informed what part Fräulein Anna was studying at present, and with a hope that they might not be allowed to interrupt their performance; for Adelaida of course accompanied her sister. But the person most interested (to judge from appearances) in Aennchen's progress was Hermann von Adelmann. He was always present to turn over the leaves; he applauded with the voice of Stentor; and took umbrage at the least whisper of failure. Had they no good singers, he asked, at the Karlsruhe theatre? Why, it was notorious that some of the best singers ever heard had come from there. Herr Tannhäuser recollected several who had achieved European reputations; and yet none of them, by universal consent, could sing like Aennchen. Bah! failure was an impossibility.

And so six months glided by; Herr Tannhäuser toiling assiduously, Aennchen practising hopefully, Adelaida aiding sisterly, and Hermann abetting lovingly. At last the eventful night arrived when Aennchen was to make her first appearance before the blazing footlights, face the inquisitive stare (paid for at the door) of hundreds of curious eyes, hear unmoved the envious whispers of her scenic sisterhood, and bear unruffled all the fuss of the querulous, nervous manager. But her father gazed fondly up from the orchestra; Adelaida and Hermann whispered courage from the side-scenes; and here and there amongst the audience a well-known face smiled cordial sympathy. The grand duke and the whole court were there; and the opera was the *Sonnambula*. Suffice it to say, Aennchen was more than successful: bouquets fell thick from the grand ducal and other boxes; the whole house rose in a mass, and there was a triumphant shout of '*Es lebe die Amsel!*' (The Blackbird for ever!)

There was joy that night in the little wooden house at the corner of Friedrichstrasse.

The two sisters, on reaching home, had hurried to the chamber which they shared in common, and embraced a thousand times, and wept a thousand tears, but not of sorrow; had breathed a simple prayer of thanksgiving to the Giver of all good gifts; and now, with ornaments laid aside, in simple homely dress, descended to the parlour. A frugal supper was laid, but contentment made of it a feast, and all fell to with hungry zest on *Dickmilch* and *Butterbrod*, and the like uncostly fare. But the blood of the noble vine was there; there was Steinwein, precious and old, than which no better ever gushed from the clusters that hang at Würzburg. For occasions such as this, Herr Tannhäuser had kept it; and filling a glass with the sparkling treasure, he drank: 'The health of the Blackbird! God bless and prosper her! May her success to-night foreshadow her success at Vienna!'

'*Es lebe die Amsel!*' cried Hermann, repeating the words of the shout at the theatre.

'God bless thee, Aennchen,' said Adelaida, as she tossed her bumper bravely down.

Then Aennchen returned thanks; but her heart was full; she had scarce words enough for 'Thanks, dear father,' as she put her arms about his neck and kissed his beaming face, saluted Hermann sisterly, and threw herself into Adelaida's arms. Soon the two sisters rose to retire, and Aennchen said, as she bade good-night: 'God grant the next success I have may find us all as happy as this!'

'Amen! my child,' her father answered; 'twere hard, indeed, to be more happy.'

And Hermann and the old man were left alone.

As a matter of course, seeing that they were Germans, they were soon hidden from each other by clouds of tobacco-smoke; but as it is by no means necessary in a friendly conversation, where you have no desire to try the effect of the human eye upon your collocator, that you should see him, it formed no bar to their conversation.

'How sweetly,' said Herr Tannhäuser, 'our Blackbird sang. Never before, I think, were her tones so clear: the duke seemed quite enchanted, and so did the Baroness von Edelstein, who is acknowledged to be the first court-judge.'

'Yes,' rejoined Hermann, 'and our dear Aennchen was so self-possessed, than which nothing is more necessary to secure success. I cannot think how she acquired such self-possession.'

'She trusts in God,' said the old man sternly; 'of whom, then, should she be afraid? She exercises her talents to the best of her ability; what, then, should make her nervous? Nervousness results either from vanity or from shocks to the system, or from constitutional weakness; from none of which, thank Heaven, does Aennchen as yet suffer.'

He paused a moment, and then continued: 'But I should like to hear this Nightingale of whom they talk so much: she came out last season, I believe, at Vienna.'

'She did,' answered Hermann. 'My aunt heard her, and tells me her voice is truly marvellous; but if I understand her, it is a thought coarse; powerful certainly, but rather peculiar than pleasing; she carries you by storm, and not by regular approaches: whereas our Blackbird's notes appeal to the heart, steal the affections, win the sympathies.'

'I fear, my son,' returned the old man with a smile, 'that we are hardly impartial judges in such a case as the comparative excellences of blackbirds and nightingales.'

And so they chatted till the night was far advanced. At length Hermann departed to his own lodgings; and the old man wended his way to bed, to dream of blackbirds and nightingales and *prime donne*, and showers of bouquets and shouts of applause, and

grand-ducal, and even royal and imperial 'bravas,' and courtiers' noiseless tapping of gloved hands, and obsequious managers, and large salaries, and endless 'last appearances'—but suddenly in his dream there was like the snap of a violin-string, and at the snap he awoke. But all was well, and he fell asleep again.

After her success, Aennchen sang constantly, and as constantly improved in voice and in favour with both court and people; so that managers, hearing of her fame, came from far to judge for themselves, listened to her warbling, and were charmed; and offered for her services terms which made her father's eyes sparkle. At London, Paris, or Vienna, his Aennchen might now with confidence make her grand début, and if successful—as there was but little doubt she would be—might take her stand upon the ground of the famous Tiddler, and join in the pastime which is there in vogue. An agreement, therefore, was soon entered into that, at the expiration of a few months, Aennchen should commence an engagement at Vienna, and that she should be announced in the playbills as *Die Amsel von Karlsruhe*.

Herr Tannhäuser's heart leaped within him: he had fulfilled, he had every reason to hope, the dying request of his wife; his long years of toil were about to be rewarded. Already he saw in imagination both his daughters well settled in life—one married to a well-born man of moderate means; the other, with a fortune acquired by her own talents and his superintendence, wedded—it might well be—to one of high estate. 'Prudens futuri temporis exitum caliginosa nocte premit Deus.'

The months had flown; the time was drawing near for Aennchen's departure for Vienna. All were in the highest spirits, Hermann in the eighth heaven. He was continually pulling from his pocket, as if by accident, a little box, which, when opened, displayed to view a small plain gold ring; and the sight of this ring always produced a similar impression upon each of four persons—namely, Herr Tannhäuser, Aennchen, Adelaida, and Hermann. The first (it was not a particularly witty family, and enjoyed very small jokes) always wondered whose finger it would fit; the second and third always kissed one another; the third always blushed; and the fourth always earnestly declared that he couldn't think what it was he had in his pocket, and only took it out to see what it was.

For Hermann and Adelaida, it was arranged, should be married a week after Aennchen's first appearance at Vienna; bridesmaids had been selected amongst the relations at Vienna of the late Frau Tannhäuser; the dresses had been ordered; the breakfast was to be given at the hotel where the Tannhäusers would put up; and the clergyman had been engaged to perform the ceremony. Moreover, a circumstance had transpired lately which tended to increase the general hilarity.

Herr Tannhäuser, contrary to his wont, had left home for a short time, refusing to say whither he was going, or to explain himself further than to inform his wondering family that business required his temporary absence. When he returned, however, so joyous was his look, that it was pretty plain his business had been of a satisfactory nature. As his daughters and Hermann rushed to meet him at their little garden-gate, 'It's all right!' he shouted cheerily: 'I've seen her.'

'What is all right?' exclaimed three voices together—'and whom have you seen, pray?'

'I tell you I have seen her, and what is more, I've heard her too.'

'But whom have you both seen and heard—the Sphinx?' said Hermann; 'and did you by shrewd answers drive her to suicide, as you will me by your enigmatical assertions? I adjure you by your duty towards me as your son-in-law elect that you tell me instantly whom you have seen.'

'I can guess,' said Adelaida, but Aennchen was pale and silent.

'Clever miss!' said her father; 'and pray, whom have I seen?'

'The Nightingale,' was the reply; 'I'm sure it is the Nightingale.'

'The Nightingale!' echoed Hermann; but Aennchen's colour went and came, and not a word escaped her lips.

'Yes, the Nightingale,' said Herr Tannhäuser. 'I heard she was to sing the very part which Aennchen is to take at her début, and I determined to go at any cost, and learn what Aennchen has to fear.'

'And what do you say?' cried Hermann and Adelaida together; but Aennchen was still silent, and still her colour came and went.

'To say she has nothing to fear,' was the answer, 'would be simply telling an untruth, for a more magnificent voice I never heard; but Aennchen's has more compass, more sweetness, more flexibility, and I feel as confident as to the result as I do that grace and dexterity are more than a match for less wieldy force. Not that I would have you for a moment to infer that the Nightingale has not great skill; but Aennchen's is still more exquisite, still more subtle;' and Herr Tannhäuser kissed his Blackbird encouragingly. Then the colour remained in Aennchen's cheeks, and Hermann and Adelaida breathed more freely.

And now the eventful day arrived when they were to start by *Eilwagen* (or diligence) on their journey to the Kaiserstadt. They arrived in safety, and as they drove to their hotel up Kärntnerstrasse, they saw, not without a shudder, the opera-house where Aennchen's fortunes would be made or marred. But a few nights intervened, and then the evening of her trial would come: on one of those nights the dreaded Nightingale would sing, and the question was debated whether Aennchen should go and hear her or not. It was decided that she should, and good results were due to that decision, for it soon got rumoured about that she was in the house; hundreds of opera-glasses opened fire upon her, and she grew half accustomed to the eye-artillery of those who would be her judges. She was enabled to form an opinion as to the power she must exert to fill the house when full—so different a feat from filling it at a rehearsal; she was distracted from dwelling too much upon her own approaching trial, and she could thus measure herself in her own mind with the only person who was likely to be her rival.

The Nightingale sang, and Aennchen was electrified. Such powerful tones she had never heard, but low to her own heart she whispered confidently: 'My power is less, my art is more: the dear father was right; I have more compass and more sweetness: I feel I cannot fail.' And a noble feeling of emulation was roused within her, which moved her to excel herself, just as in olden time a gallant knight was inspired to do the more worshipfully the lustier was his adversary.

'What thinkest thou, Aennchen?' her father said as they parted for the night.

'Dear father, a still small voice within assures me I cannot fail,' was the simple trustful answer.

'Good-night, then, my child. God bless and strengthen thee; may thy sleep refresh thee, and thy dreams confirm thee.'

'Good-night, dear Aennchen,' chimed Hermann and Adelaida; 'to-morrow we will greet thee Queen of Song.' And the four parted cheerfully for the night.

But again that night, Herr Tannhäuser's dreams were troubled, and he was waked by a sound like the snap of a violin-string. Still, all was well, and he slept again.

The morning came, and with it the rehearsal; the critics were profuse in praise; the manager, conse-

quently, was charmed and dissolved in compliments. Slowly, too slowly the day declined, but at last the eventual hour arrived. Herr Tannhäuser had obtained permission to play in the orchestra, that the sight of him might tend to familiarise Aennchen with her new position; and Hermann and Adelaida were ensconced behind the side-scenes; so once more Aennchen felt a consciousness of support as her father gazed fondly up from below, and her sister and her sister's lover breathed courage upon her from the side. The opera was once more the *Sonnambula*. The house was crowded in every part; and when Amina entered in the third scene, she was received with a burst of applause, so graceful was her bearing. But it was evident that at first the audience did not appreciate her voice; that it was uncommon, they could feel, but it required time to work its subtle effects; and at the conclusion of the first act there was evidently a division of feeling. Some applauded vehemently, but they were few, and the elegance of her acting might have accounted for that; for in her plain white dress she looked an angel from above. But the majority kept a dead silence. Some few, being in doubt, hissed, just as, under the same circumstances at whist, they would play a trump.

Herr Tannhäuser was in despair; moreover, a string of his violin snapped, and he bethought him of his dream; he boded evil; he saw the toil of years unfruitful, the hopes of years blighted; his eyes grew dim, and his soul fainted within him. But soon his courage revived; the applause at last was more generally diffused. It came at first in those faint, random, dropping beats that resemble the plash of big raindrops, the precursors of a thunder-shower; then it grew louder and more regular; and *Ah! non giunge* was received with an uproar. Aennchen must twice repeat it, and bouquets and wreaths, wreaths and bouquets fell around her as she sang, till the stage was a garden of flowers. She was called before the curtain to hear repeated shouts of '*Es lebe die Aemel!*' and every one turned to his neighbour and said: '*Sie hat die Nachtigall überwunden!*' (She has beaten the Nightingale).

But the revulsion of feeling was too much for Herr Tannhäuser. The snap of the violin-string was no lying omen; his nerves had been strung a peg too high; a chord in his brain had burst asunder, and he fell to the ground insensible. So the victory was that night turned into mourning in the family of the Tannhäusers.

Aennchen and Adelaida and Hermann had all been unconscious of Herr Tannhäuser's fall. Aennchen, as she made her last courtesy on retiring, had just caught a glimpse of her father's face, and had seen him start up excitedly from his seat; but beyond that, she had seen nothing. She was clasped in mutual, speechless joy in Adelaida's arms, with Hermann watching them sympathisingly, whilst he to whom she owed both her being and her success lay senseless in the arms of strangers. Strangers conveyed him to his hotel, laid him in bed with all gentleness, and summoned a physician with all dispatch. But how to break the news to Aennchen? All the strangers shrank from that. Envy herself would scarce have liked to whisper such news in the ears of a successful *débutante*. Now, disagreeable business is considered the perquisite of managers; on the manager, therefore, devolved the responsibility of preparing our happy trio for the shock which awaited their return.

He was approaching them with the side-long gait of a bearer of ill-tidings just as Adelaida had said: 'I wonder what can detain the dear father; he should have joined us long ago. But here is Herr Nickel, he can no doubt give us information. Pray, Herr Nickel, have you seen my father?'

'I have but this moment left him, *mein Fräulein*,' said he; 'and I was to tell you not to wait for him.'

'Not wait for him! Why, he must go home, and we had better all go together; indeed, we have been expecting him this long while.'

'He has gone home, *mein Fräulein*,' said the manager sadly.

'Gone! and without us!' exclaimed the trio in a breath. 'How very shabby!'—'Did he give no reason?' added Adelaida.

'He was—somewhat—indisposed,' replied the manager with the air of a prevaricator, 'and—er—slightly—er—overcome.'

Adelaida and her sister exchanged glances, and grew pale, whilst Hermann remarked gloomily: 'It must be more than slight indisposition which could prevent his coming.'

Then the trio took a melancholy farewell of the manager, and drove away home in silence: not a word was spoken, but each was thinking of Aennchen's words: 'God grant the next success I have may find us all as happy as this;' and they seemed like the raven's croak.

At the door of their hotel they were met by the host, an unusual attention, boding no good; he complimented *mein Fräulein* in anything but a hearty, easy fashion, and as he preceded the party to the sitting-room, he shot continual glances at them over his shoulder, which glances seemed harbingers of ill. When he opened the door, there rose up to greet them not Herr Tannhäuser, but a gentleman whose profession they would have been at no loss to guess even if he had not been introduced to them as Herr Doctor Schwarz. The doctor was of course very polite (for Abernethy was a rule-proving exception), and complimented Aennchen upon her 'stupendous success;' but when he was entreated to dismiss that subject, and tell them fully the condition of Herr Tannhäuser, he grew short and oracular. By diligent questioning, however, then elicited that Herr Tannhäuser must not at present be on any account disturbed; that his daughter's success had been too much for him; that he required long rest and much watching; that Dr Schwarz had, in fact, been forced to send for two colleagues, both of whom were at the moment in attendance on the patient; and at last they wrested an acknowledgment from the reluctant doctor; they discovered that Herr Tannhäuser was dangerously ill, was in a high fever, was even delirious, and required force to keep him in bed. They would at once have rushed to the sick-room, but the doctor restrained them. Their presence, he said, could do no possible good, and would most likely do harm; the sight of Aennchen was certain to bring on a paroxysm. He promised to bring them hourly bulletins, and they were forced to be content. Little sleep was there that night for the trio that had been so joyous, little exultation on the part of the successful songstress, little gratulation from her sorrowing companions. All night they kept vigil; and the next day the violence was a little abated, and Adelaida was admitted as nurse. But Aennchen must be kept carefully out of sight.

For days, Herr Tannhäuser struggled with death. Out of doors, the doctor had made cautious inquiries of all the Tannhäuser circle in Vienna, and had had his fears confirmed—there were traces of insanity in the family. So Herr Tannhäuser escaped death, but reason was for ever unseated. Meanwhile, Aennchen had, twice a week, fulfilled her duties, for the public servant must stifle private grief—the father must play Charles Surface though his child lie dying at home; and the daughter must warble her sweetest though her father be raving in 'the padded room.' So Aennchen essayed to sing her best on the very day when her father had been placed in confinement; but her eyes were dim, her heart was far away, and her voice was husky with her morning sobs: she broke down.

Now, the public knew not her troubles; they had paid their money to be charmed; they were anything

but charmed, and grumbled audibly. She broke down again.

This was, from the public point of view, sheer cheating, of which they shewed their proper sense by a vigorous hiss. They didn't mean any harm; they merely meant to hint to the manager that the entertainment was not worth half a guinea, or whatever they might have paid; and that, if the young lady couldn't sing any better than that, it would be as well to drop the opera, and have a pantomime. They never observed how pale poor Aennchen turned; how she tottered as she hurried behind the scenes; how she swooned in Hermann's arms, who was waiting to escort her home; and they never dreamed, when the manager came forward, shaking like a top-heavy blanc-mange, to apologise for Aennchen's *indisposition*, that they had wounded a fellow-creature to the death. But Aennchen never sang again—except once.

Her nervous system had received a shock from which she never recovered; from her bed she never rose again; and for days and nights Adelaida tended her through fever and delirium.

Poor Adelaida! Hermann had been summoned home by the death of a near relative, just when she needed more than ever consolation, for the doctors had told her that even should Aennchen recover, the hereditary plague would be upon her—her mind would go as her father's had gone. And yet this absence of Hermann's seemed to her afterwards most providential, for it happened on a day that Aennchen fell into a deep sleep, and Adelaida sat by her, and pondered what the doctors had said; and as she pondered, her eyes were suddenly opened, and 'a horror fell upon her' as she reflected how painful a thing it would be should the hereditary plague descend through her to any children she might have by Hermann; and the more she thought, the more she was convinced that a woman with such a taint should never marry; and for a while she sat aghast; but suddenly her mind was made up, and pale with the paleness of a breaking heart, but a determination not to be broken, she seized a pen, and wrote:

DEAREST HERMANN—We must never meet again. Do not start, or think me mad. Alas! that very word should explain my conduct. See you not that what has befallen the dear father, and what the doctors fear for Aennchen, may also come upon me? As I sat just now and pondered (for Aennchen is sleeping now), a sudden light broke in upon me—I saw the sin I was about to commit, and, thank God! in time to draw back. Yes, sin, Hermann! for how could I answer it to the dear God, that I had been the means of perpetuating a curse amongst his children? This implies a reproach, you will say, upon them to whom I owe my being. No, Hermann; they, my heart assures me, erred through ignorance; but as for me, my eyes are open—alas! my eyes are indeed open. Therefore, I say, Hermann, we must never meet again. Call me not cruel, or unloving; my words are the best proof of my love—my hopeless, my undying love. I could not trust myself in your presence; at your side, my resolution would vanish. And in the name of that love—the more sacred from its very helplessness—let us never meet again! My heart is broken, but my mind is firm; I cannot cease to love, but I dare not—nay, I would not—sin against God. 'Perchance,' we read in our favourite English poet,

Hereafter in that world where all are pure,
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine.

Let that be our consolation. And now, dearest, dearest Hermann, farewell—for ever, on earth. Forgive me, that I must pain you; pity me, that I must lose you; and in the name of our sweet, our hapless love, believe me, yours here and hereafter (in the spirit),

ADELAIDA.

Then came the pent-up tears; but lest reaction should set in, she left the room, and gave orders that her letter be posted immediately. When she returned, poor Aennchen was awake.

'You have left me,' she said querulously.

'Only for a few seconds, dear,' was the reply.

'Ah!' said Aennchen, 'I was just dreaming of you: I dreamed that you and Hermann had quarrelled.'

'O no!' replied Adelaida; 'that can never be,' and once more Aennchen slumbered, whilst Adelaida sat wondering what it could mean that her sister should speak so coherently and sleep so peacefully. But so it was for a day or two; Aennchen had such deep sleeps that, without fear, Adelaida might leave her for more than two hours at a time. One day, when she had left her sleeping, and retired to her own room, she was startled to hear a well-known air. The voice that sang was preternaturally clear and sweet; it was evidently her sister's, and more exquisite than even in its best days. She listened, and heard *Ah! non credea* being sung as she had never heard it before. She hastened to the sick-room, and there lay Aennchen all unconscious. '*Es ist die Schwanenstimme*' (It is the swan's voice), said Adelaida below her breath. Suddenly Aennchen opened her eyes, gazed triumphantly at her sister, said plaintively: 'Kiss me, dearest,' and all was over. The voice returned in melody to Him who gave it, and Adelaida was alone.

Fortune had deserted the house of Tannhäuser; the pride of the family was dead; the father of the family was worse than dead; and Adelaida had to win her bread by teaching the pianoforte, for she felt she was unequal to playing in public. The first letter she received from Hermann was fervid, impassioned, full of undying affection, and attempts to prove that her state of mind was brought on by worry and want of rest; soon—for he had judicious parents and friends about him, who thought it pity for so fine a young man to remain bound to a young woman whom he couldn't marry (they considered the young woman had behaved with great propriety in the matter, for it was certainly a serious matter to marry a mad woman, still, she had only done her duty); and who talked him over cautiously—his letters grew few and cold; in twelve months they ceased, and in eighteen he had married another. The broken heart received another wrench, and Adelaida prayed for death.

Still she laboured in her weary occupation, which rendered her a bare subsistence; and every quarter, to her unbounded astonishment, came an addition to her slender funds with the simple inscription, 'From one who has gained by the misfortunes of others.'

It was the Nightingale.

Before a remark could be made upon this story, Mr Quiverful, who had been in a grievous state of anxiety and alarm for some minutes, inquired anxiously whether we had heard anybody tapping at the window.

'Good Heavens!' cried Simperton, moving his chair with rapidity from that neighbourhood, in which he chanced to be sitting; 'I wish you wouldn't, Mr Quiverful; you make a person quite uncomfortable, making observations of that kind at this time of night.'

'It is past twelve, and very cold,' observed Crasket gloomily. 'Time is no object to myself; but remember we might immediately procure an admirable supper, and retire to—'

Here a very distinct tap at the window, as loud as any expression of the Cock Lane Ghost's, sent the majority of us—and Crasket for once was with it—into the more remote portion of the apartment. Mr Mooney, however, under the impression

that it was his shaving-water, grunted out 'Thank you,' and immediately went to sleep again; Mr Quiverful exclaimed: 'Huah! I know what it is. I told 'em to do it in case of our being locked up. It is the news of an addition to my family. If it was a girl, they were to scratch; if it was a boy, they were to rap like that.'

The knock was repeated.

'Why, bless my heart and body, if it ain't Twins!' cried the wretched Quiverful. 'But all's well,' added he, as a sort of tattoo was beaten upon the window-pane. 'Let us be thankful; it might have been worse.'

'Worse!' exclaimed Mr Crasket, testily, 'why, what is Twins, or even Thrins, compared to eleven?'

'Impossible!' exclaimed Quiverful, aghast at such a frightful supposition, and turning his ear mechanically towards the window-pane.

'Compared, I repeat, to eleven jurymen, bent upon destroying their constitutions for the sake of bringing in a verdict against evidence, and a man of my powers of endurance? Was anything more incredible ever witnessed?'

'Wal, sir,' returned a voice so sharp and dissonant that it quite electrified us, 'if you ask that question, I can answer you. I have seen myself a sight more incredible than that of eleven honest men determined not to be overbragged by a squash-headed, whitlin-of-nuthin, sateful old crittur.'

'Really, Mr Richards,' interrupted I—for it was the supercargo who was delivering these unexpected remarks as rapidly as they could find expression through his nose—'I cannot, as foreman of this jury, permit you to use language of this kind; but if you have any personal experience of a striking character to communicate, I am sure it will give us very great pleasure to hear it. In that case, Silence, if you please, Mr Crasket—I would not give either of them a minute to spit fire in)—silence, gentlemen all, I beg, for

MR RICHARDS'S STORY.*

I beg to confess, gentlemen, that I was born an American; but I believe I am justified in assuring you that it is quite an erroneous idea to suppose that as a people we are prone to exaggerate. The only foundation for that opinion rests, I imagine, on the peculiar humour of writers in our newspapers who confound wit with mendacity. I know there are many among our people who have travelled extensively, and who, in consequence of the impression which prevails in England on this subject, actually fear to publish an account of their adventures. I should not myself like to do so without suppressing many interesting incidents, and among them one very remarkable one, which, however, I have no hesitation in telling you, since chance has thrown us together for a few hours.

It was once my fate to be within a very little of being wrecked upon the coast of Yucatan; our vessel, however, escaped with considerable damage; and while it was being repaired in a certain port there, whose name I cannot trust myself to pronounce, I took an expedition with the chief mate into the interior. We had heard—as most persons have—of the existence of gigantic ruins in that country, reared no one knows by whom, in ages inconceivably remote from our own time; and although not given to antiquarian research in a general way, yet, having nothing else to do, we entered with avidity upon our researches. For some time, we

were entirely unsuccessful; but after several days we arrived at a village, the name of which the natives pronounced as though it were spelled Xatucospe. Here we brought the wretched male inhabitants together as usual by allowing them to fill their pipes from our stock of tobacco. All these men seemed well aware of the existence of ruins in the vicinity; but the man who spoke most on the subject was about the most ruined and miserable-looking of them all. This individual we engaged as our guide; and with a proper supply of everything it was likely we should require, we set off.

After travelling about five hours, but no very great distance, on account of the badness of the road, we came upon some ruins of the most massive character. They were partly hidden by enormous trees, the diameter of which I should be afraid to tell you; but in comparison with them, the largest elm-trees I have seen in England are mere twigs. As well as was possible among such obstacles, we measured the length of the curved wall which enclosed these ruins, or, speaking more correctly, which formed the back-ground. It measured three hundred and seventeen paces; and its thickness was such, that when the top was perfect, troops might have been drawn up at least six deep to defend it against the attacks of besiegers. Scattered on the ground in all directions were huge blocks of stone, evidently the remains of buildings, half buried among fragments of masonry and herbage. The Indian stood patiently waiting while we examined these ruins, which occupied us till nearly dark, when we set to work to make a shelter for the night. The next morning, the Indian took a heavy knife from his belt, and cut a large bundle of long twigs, which he twisted into several torches while we were preparing breakfast. The mules he tied carefully to trees, and as soon as we were ready to begin exploring afresh, invited us to come with him. The place to which we followed him was between two and three hundred yards from where we had passed the night, and the particular structure to which he directed our attention was a pyramid, so completely hidden among the gigantic trees, that we might have passed within two or three hundred yards of it over and over again without perceiving it. Its base seemed perfectly square, being seventy-three paces on each side. All round it were scattered fragments of stone, which we supposed had fallen from its summit. On the east side we were shewn an opening, and our guide proceeded to light the torches. We had some difficulty in forcing our way through the rubbish which almost blocked up the entrance, but this accomplished, we walked along a passage till we found ourselves in a chamber which appeared to occupy the centre only of the pyramid, the surrounding walls being to all appearance solid, and necessarily so, considering the enormous weight they had to support. On all the walls of this chamber were figures of various kinds. Groups of men were represented seated on triangular blocks, their legs folded in the eastern manner, with sandals on their feet, and robes which probably reached their knees when they were standing upright. These robes were invariably painted red, and on the breast of each figure was a square white breastplate, on which several characters were inscribed. No two of these breastplates were entirely alike, though the same characters recurred frequently. The tops of their heads were covered with what looked to be a kind of hood attached to, or forming part of, the robe. But the most interesting thing of all was the form of the head. The chin was slightly retreating, the nose large; and the forehead receded to such an extent, that the line from the tip of the nose to the edge of the hood was inclined at an angle of about forty-five degrees. Before one of these groups, an animal, having more the appearance of a lion than any other beast with which we were acquainted, was lying, holding beneath

* Translated from the American.

its paw the ends of a number of cords which bound a cluster of individuals of a different type to the seated figures, and entirely devoid of clothing. Adjoining this picture was one which represented the same seated figures, but differently grouped. Instead of being seated in a straight line, they were depicted standing at right angles, with a throne in the background, filled by a seated figure of colossal dimensions. Being represented as facing the spectator, the receding forehead was not so perceptible, but it was sufficiently so to indicate that he belonged to the same race. There were many other groups of great interest painted on the walls, besides innumerable symbols, geometrical figures, and representations of animals, as little like any that we had ever seen as those in any Tom-fool volume of heraldry. We spent the day in examining and sketching these, which were, of course, not only interesting in themselves, but had a particular interest for us as travellers, who were the first Europeans to see them.

We passed the night in the chamber, and a part of the following day in a further examination of the ruins. I have already told you that the base of the pyramid measured eighty-three paces.

'Nay,' said I, 'I think you mentioned seventy-three, Mr Richards.'

'Eighty-three,' returned the supercargo with emphasis. 'Perhaps for the chairman I may go so low as to say eighty-two, but not one pace more do I take off for any man. Well, then, the base of this pyramid measuring thus much, it was easy to ascertain, by means of the shadow it cast, that its present height was quite four hundred feet. We asked the Indian if he had ever climbed to the top. He told us that he had tried to do so, but when he had ascended a good way up, he found the side too smooth to give him foothold; since then, he had made no other attempt. Being desirous of ascertaining what kind of view we should get from the summit, we determined to make the attempt to ascend it ourselves. With the assistance of a powerful glass, we were able to select the side which, from its roughness, gave us the best chance of performing this with the greatest ease; moreover, we had with us some very useful little implements, such as I would advise any man to carry with him who contemplates a journey through forests, to enable him to ascend trees with facility, and which are exceedingly useful under other circumstances. These were my own invention. They were of steel, shaped like the letter U, with sharp curved claws projecting at right angles from the upper part. Even with the assistance of these, the work of ascending the pyramid was so extremely difficult and fatiguing, that if it had not been for the encouragement we gave each other, we should have abandoned the attempt before we had completed half the distance. We reached the top at last, and crawling a yard or two from the edge, we lay quite still for some minutes to recover our strength.

Our first feeling, on looking round us, was one of great disappointment. In every direction extended a sea of foliage, which fluttered in the gentle wind, that blew steadily at this elevation, and caused the leaves to reflect the bright sunshine with a rustling murmur. Turning our eyes from these objects, we began an examination of the structure on which we were standing. My companion was a few feet in advance of me, and startled me by suddenly exclaiming: 'Take care! here is a hole.' We were so surprised by this discovery—for the mind is so accustomed to associate solidity with erections of this kind—that we stood still for a minute or two staring at it, as though it had been a living specimen of one of the strange figures we had seen in the chamber at the base. When this had passed, we stepped cautiously forward to look into it. It was partially choked with fragments of stone, and we had to remove these before we were able to distinguish that they rested on stone steps. You may imagine

our excitement when we made this discovery. By throwing our canvas coats over the opening, we excluded the light, and were thus able to ascertain that we should require a torch before we ventured on descending. No prudent traveller journeys without a ball or two of strong string, and one of these I had in my pocket. Fastening a stone to the end of the string, I lowered it to our guide, to whom I shouted directions to tie some torches to it. As soon as we had pulled up these, we lighted one, and lowering the others down the stairs till they rested on something, we began cautiously to follow them. It was rather a nervous undertaking, chiefly in consequence of the loose stones which lay on the steps, which, if they had slipped away beneath our feet, might have carried us down into the darkness, for aught we knew, as low as the point from which we had started. After a time, which our anxiety made appear very protracted, we reached the bottom, and found ourselves at the entrance of a vast chamber, into which daylight entered through openings in the walls, carried obliquely upwards. The floor was of smooth stone, and ornamented with coloured stones of a harder kind, and more highly polished, which were let into the pavement in as many different designs as though it were a kaleidoscope. The walls were covered with unintelligible inscriptions, painted with the greatest care, the characters being arranged in horizontal lines, and all of precisely similar size. The variety of these characters excited our astonishment; though there were thousands of them, it was seldom that either of them recurred. We went completely round this room before we discovered that to the right of the steps by which we had descended was another flight of steps. These also we descended, counting them as we went, and at the bottom we found that there were eighty-eight in all; and from the height of these steps, we were confirmed in our estimate of the height of the apartment into which they led us—namely, forty feet. This apartment was the most wonderful I ever beheld. The light was so brilliant, that, coming as we did from the dark staircase, it blinded us for some minutes. The light was admitted through apertures in the wall in the same manner as in the room above, but these were so contrived that the rays fell upon a glittering surface, which threw up a fountain of light to the ceiling, from whence it was reflected in every direction by similar but smaller mirrors fixed at slightly different angles, and also from others which were let into the upper part of the walls. Further examination shewed that, from the glittering circle on the floor, lines of the same material about an inch in width ran in the direction of the openings, the only use of which, as far as we could judge, being to mark the hour as the sun shone along them. Round each mirror, and running in a wave-line below them, was a broad band having a metallic lustre, and to all appearance golden, but much too high for us to reach by any contrivance at our command. Beneath this line, at intervals of a few feet, were depicted faces gigantic, but of exceeding beauty, a bearded face alternating with one quite smooth, apparently intended to represent a woman. The bearded faces were all of a brown hue; but the others were fair, with a pink tint in the cheeks, the features being remarkably like those of the white women I have seen in the interior of Morocco. There were a few characters painted under each; but the inscriptions in this chamber were very few compared with those in the chamber above. Beneath these were numerous niches, and in each niche a small image of some animal—sometimes a lion, a panther, or other familiar beast, but many of them models of animals of extraordinary form, the like of which do not now exist, but which were certainly modelled from a type, as we could see by various minute peculiarities which occurred in all models of the same animal. Most of these were formed of the same lustrous metal or

alloy, which still remained untarnished after the lapse of unknown ages; but there were some specimens made of gold, in which the workmanship was much inferior.

At intervals of five paces, these niches were divided by statues thirteen or fourteen feet high, of the most perfect finish, and formed, as it seemed to us, of red clay. The face was so full of expression, and the whole figure so lifelike, that a single glance was sufficient to fix the portrait on the memory beyond the possibility of forgetting it. At each end of the room were numerous long recesses or shelves, on which were placed vessels of various sizes and shape, some made of gold, and others of the metal we have spoken of; those of the former metal being invariably of inferior workmanship to the latter. There were no arms of any kind; and the only implement, if, indeed, it were an implement, closely resembled the trident which Britannia is represented as holding in her hand. The vessels of gold we determined to carry away with us, and to leave the other things till we could return with better means of transport. By degrees we got some of them to the top of the pyramid; and taking off my coat, I rolled two or three of the vessels in it, according to their size, and called to the Indian to take care of them, and fasten my coat to the string, that I might draw it up again for more. Having lowered as many as we thought it would be possible to carry away, we decided, though only after much hesitation, on descending still lower into the pyramid. Relighting the torch, we began creeping slowly down the third flight of steps. The chamber which this led us into was totally dark; and there was a peculiar smell in it which I cannot say was either pleasant or the reverse. In such intense darkness, our torches only lighted up a small space round us. Our first attention was directed to the wall; but instead of seeing a piece of solid masonry, we saw what looked like a section of a beehive. In each cell we examined we could discern a little within the entrance a dark object. Giving my friend the torch I carried, I laid hold of this, and tried, but vainly, to draw it out. Finding there was nothing else available as a candle-stick, I drew off my boot, and we stuck the torches in this, and gave our whole strength to dragging out one of these objects. It was so long, it seemed as if we should never get to the end of it; and when at last a human face came suddenly full in the glare of the torches, we dropped it as instantaneously as though we had received an electric shock. Of course, we soon recovered from our alarm, but not from our surprise, for from the place where we were standing to the head was several yards. That this was one figure, we supposed; but it was not till we had stripped off the tissue in which it was enveloped from its head downwards that we could thoroughly believe it. The body was that of a man, and was so excessively hard that to the touch it resembled stone. The face had the deep brown tint observable in the case of the paintings above, but the rest of the body was fair, proving that in its lifetime it had been enveloped in clothing. We measured its length with great care, by spanning it from head to foot; and we afterwards ascertained that, according to my measurement, it was twelve feet seven inches long; and according to my friend's, three inches more.

The mere spectacle of such a gigantic figure, so little altered from life, that it looked under the torch-light as if it were about to wake from a deep sleep, though the size of the trees which grew close to the pyramid proved it must have lain here for thousands of years, was not without its effect on our nerves; and it was with a feeling almost of reverence that we drew out the figure which occupied a cell in its immediate vicinity. The description I have given of the other applies also to this, the only difference being in the expression of the countenance. Reverently cover-

ing the bodies with the cloth in which they had been wrapped, my friend took up our torches, and I was sitting on the pavement, in the act of drawing on my boot, when I was almost struck dead with fright at the sight of a figure silently moving towards us from the blackness which surrounded us. The next instant, I perceived it was the Indian, and with the ferocity which follows a fright when it is found to be groundless, I sprang to my feet with the momentary desire that I could annihilate him. Doubtless he saw by the light which was shining full on my face something that indicated this desire, but he instantly turned and ran into the darkness. I had just time to call him, before we heard a faint cry like the sound which accompanies the sudden expulsion of breath from a man's body, and, directly afterwards, a dull sound as of the falling of a heavy body in a thick liquid. Again and again, we shouted to the Indian, but received no answer. Holding our torches as far before us as we could, we followed inch by inch the direction in which the guide had fled, till we could distinguish the edge of the opening down which he had fallen. We laid ourselves flat on the pavement, but the light from our torches was too weak to enable us to see anything but the same blackness which surrounded us in every other direction. After exchanging a few words, I left my friend, and made my way to the top of the building, and brought down the ball of string. We tied one of the torches to this, and lowered it down, in the hope of being able to see what had become of the Indian. It had descended some distance, when we began to perceive a brilliant halo playing about it, and almost at the same moment this shot out like a sheet of lambent fire, and in less time than I can mention it, we were looking into a pit of flame, from which there rose a suffocating smoke, with a strong pitch-like smell. Rolling ourselves back with the quickness of thought, we got on our feet, and just as we felt we were about to fall to the ground from the effects of the smoke, we found the steps, and hastened with all the speed possible to the open air. But so rapidly did the smoke rise, that we saw it faintly emerging from the summit of the pyramid before we commenced our descent.

The difficulty of descending was greater than that of ascending; and bitter was the disappointment which awaited us at the bottom. We expected to see the articles we had lowered lying there, but none were visible. We searched in every direction, as well as in the chamber at the base of the pyramid, but unsuccessfully, and this for several days, during the whole of which time the smoke continued to rise into the air. Whether the Indian had hidden them before he indulged the curiosity which led to the abrupt termination of his existence, or whether other Indians had carried them off after he had commenced the ascent, we could never discover.

We returned to the pyramid afterwards, and ascended it again; but though undistinguishable from the ground below, we found that smoke was still issuing from the opening which led into the interior.

And so ends my story.

'Well, I never!' observed Mr Simperton, when this extraordinary experience was concluded. 'And is it your opinion, Mr Richards, that the pyramid is smoking now?'

'It is impossible for me to say, sir,' replied the narrator imperturbably. 'I do not venture to affirm anything which I have not seen with my own eyes.'

'Did not the smoke affect your vision in any way?' inquired Mr Crasket sardonically. 'If the adventure had occurred in England, I should have felt justified in remarking that it was a fiction.'

'Then you may consider yourself exceedingly fortunate,' observed the supercargo, taking his quid

into his fingers, in order to be very distinct, 'that the adventure occurred in Yucatan.'

The corrugated iron merchant 'looked snakes' (as Mr Richards subsequently observed), but thought it more discreet to utter no remark beyond the monosyllable 'Ah.'

The supercargo nodded contemptuously; then bringing his right eye to bear upon the rest of the company, he shut it with excessive slowness and sagacity, after which he replaced the precious morsel in his mouth, and became himself again. This proffer and refusal of battle, so obvious although so inarticulate, created rather an unpleasant sensation, and thereupon ensued a silence broken only by the nasal performances of Mr Mooney. At last, 'As for Yucatan,' observed Mr Watkins, 'I never happen to have been there—although I think I remember the name of the village Mr Richards spoke of, in connection with missionary enterprise; but I remember when I was a young man to have had one adventure at least, even in this country, not at all less remarkable than that which has been just described. Mr Sunnyside was good enough to favour us with a personal experience of rather a sensational character in town; I think I shall be able to cap it with a recital of something which happened to myself, when I was travelling for Narrowwidth and Shortmesure, in the country. One of Mr Richards's fellow-countrymen played a rather prominent part in it, which perhaps put it into my head.'

'Pray let us have it,' said I. 'Silence for

MR WATKIN'S STORY.

Narrowwidth was a rich man at the period of which I am speaking, although he has since got into the Gazette. He was never high or haughty to any person in his employment, but to me he was especially civil; and when it fell to my lot to travel for the firm in Lancashire, in a certain winter, he bade me not pass within fifty miles of Hawthorpe Hall, which was his country-seat, without paying it and him a visit. Well, business took me, about Christmas-time, to Rigsdale, within thirty miles of Hawthorpe; and I wrote respectfully to say that I should take advantage of his invitation, if convenient, and drive over the Fells in the double-gig, or dog-cart as it would now be termed.

His reply was kind as usual: 'Come, by all means; but take care, if the snow comes on, you don't get lost among the hills. There has been a terrible black frost here for a fortnight, but there are now signs of change.'

Rigsdale was duly reached, my horse and trap put up at the *Greyhound*, dinner ordered, and I then proceeded to transact my business in the town. This being done, there was still an hour to spare before dinner, so I made my way up stairs to the empty billiard-room, with the intention of whiling away the time in solitary practice with the cue.

I had not been knocking the balls about for more than a few minutes, when I was joined by a tall, thin, handsome man, of very dark complexion and aquiline features, with large piercing black eyes, and black hair, worn much longer than it is the fashion to wear it now a days, who, courteously saluting me, inquired whether I had any objection to engage him for a game. I had no objection in the world, so we were quickly doing our best to beat one another; but although I had hitherto believed myself to be tolerably proficient at the game, I now discovered, to my mortification, that I was little better than a novice in comparison with the stranger. There was nothing, however, of the sharper about him; he was a gentle-

man both in manners and appearance, though, perhaps, just a shade overdressed, according to my notions of the matter, and with rather too profuse a display of jewellery about his very handsome person.

'You are like myself, I suppose, here for the night only?' said the stranger, with a bland smile, as he paused for a moment to chalk the end of his cue. 'I had engaged a post-chaise to take me across the hills to Overbarrow, when one of the horses fell lame, so I was obliged to stop short of my object; and here that insinuating landlord has persuaded me to stay till morning.'

'Suppose we dine together?' said the stranger impulsively, as he made a splendid cannon.

Of course, I could make no objection to such a proposition, although I was being ignominiously defeated at billiards, and felt sore thereat; so the bell was rung, and an order given accordingly.

'Let us be strangers no longer,' observed my opponent, as he finished the game with a magnificent back-stroke. 'Four moi, I'm a Yankee by birth and breeding, and there's my name and address.'

He handed me a card as he spoke, on which, in minute characters, was inscribed 'MR JABEZ Y. NETTLEFOLD, NEW YORK.'

'I've given myself a holiday for a couple of years,' said the American, 'to see the old country, and study your institutions, before settling down to coin dollars for the remainder of my life.'

We spent a very pleasant evening, my American friend and I. We played 'poker' together, we smoked, we sang; we concocted and drank sundry mysterious beverages well known to bar-room frequenters on the other side of the Atlantic. Nettlefold had among his luggage a guitar, on which he accompanied himself while he sang, in a rich tenor voice, a number of plaintive Spanish ballads he had picked up while knocking about Mexico. I don't know what hour it was when we got to bed; but I remember that we shook hands, and vowed an eternal friendship for each other before parting for the night.

After putting out my light, I drew back the curtain, and took a look at the state of the weather—a fine starlit night, crisp and clear, with a few inches of snow on the ground, not enough to impede our journey on the morrow.

It was late next morning when my new friend and I met at breakfast. There had been no more snow during the night, but the clouds were heavy and lowering; and the weather-wise landlord shook his head ominously when we announced to him our intention of setting out in the course of an hour on our journey over the Fells, and intimated to us that we had better stay where we were for the present, as there would certainly be a heavy fall before evening; and there was no place in England so dangerous as the north-country Fells during a snow-storm.

'All the more necessity for our starting at once,' I replied gaily. 'Let the mare be put into the trap immediately; and stow this gentleman's things and mine away as well as you can, as we are both going the same way, and will travel together.'

Finally, towards noon we found ourselves on the road, going along at a spanking pace, brimful of high spirits, and ready for any adventure. My companion before starting had brewed a steaming bowl of some insidious compound, of which we had partaken freely; and to this, perhaps, was in some measure to be attributed my reckless style of driving, and Nettlefold's frequent outbursts in the way of nigger melodies.

The landlord's predictions respecting the weather were quickly fulfilled; we had not gone more than two or three miles when the snow began to come down heavily. But we were too jolly just then to think or care much about it; we only wrapped our rugs more closely around us, refilled our pipes, gave the mare her head, and bade defiance to care and dull weather. Neither of us had ever crossed the Fells

before; and we did not leave the *Greyhound* without full instructions from the landlord as to the course we were to take; but how many miles we had gone before we unknowingly left the right road, and got into some lane that led away into the hills, I never could make out; neither can I tell for how long a time we had been unconsciously traversing this by-road before we discovered that we were at fault.

The truth dawned on us at last. We were grave and steady enough now; and certainly the prospect before us was not a pleasant one. We had set off some hours ago, and ought to have been at our journey's end by this time; yet there we were, traversing an unknown road that led away, interminably, as it seemed, into the heart of the Fells; and the snow still coming down as I had never seen it come down before. Every few minutes, a great blast of wind came rushing and rumbling down from the gullies of the hills, and half-buried us in a swirling cloud of powdered flakes. Here and there, in hollows of the road, the drift had already accumulated to such an extent as to be almost impassable; and the mare began to labour heavily. The afternoon was closing in rapidly, and still no sign of hamlet or farm. What was to be done? To turn back would have been worse than useless; there was evidently nothing for it but to struggle blindly forward, trusting to our ultimately reaching a habitation of some kind.

The last flicker of daylight was dying out through the storm, so that we were close upon the house before we saw it—a rude, low, one-story habitation, built of the great rough unhewn stones of the country; built evidently to withstand the furious winter-gales which rage in those parts; cheerless enough to look at under any other circumstances; but just then, to us poor, belated travellers, a very haven of rest and safety. Above the door hung a half-defaced sign, bearing the name of James Mattinson, with the usual declaration as to the sale of ale and spirits. The door was quickly opened in answer to our summons, and the landlord himself came out.

'One of the three hunchbacks of Damascus,' whispered Nettlefold in my ear. A thin, wiry, little man, about forty years old; with a wild mop of red hair, and a beard to match; with an astute fox-y sort of face, and quick watchful eyes; with plenty of energy and activity about him, in spite of the deformity indicated in the American's remark.

'How far is it from here to Hawthorpe Hall?'

'Fifteen good miles.'

'And how far to the nearest village?'

'Six miles at the least.'

'Would it be possible to do that distance this evening?'

'Well, if your horse was fresh, and you knew the road very well, you might mebbe manage it; otherwise, you'd stand a chance of being smothered in the drift. I shouldn't recommend you to try.'

'Then I suppose we shall be obliged to stay here till morning?'

'I fear there's nothing else for it, sir, though the accommodation's only very poor—in fact, we never take in folk for the night, except it happens, as it has with you, that they get weather-bound among the Fells; for the place is only a poor roadside public for the use of farmers and drovers passing over the hills.'

There was evidently nothing for it but to make up our minds to pass the night where we were; so we got down without further delay, and after shaking off some portion of our white covering, crossed the lowly threshold of the *Green Bush*.

We found ourselves in a room of considerable size, poorly and sparsely furnished, as was only to be expected, but having at one end of it a cheerful fire, blazing in a large old-fashioned grate, in close proximity to which we quickly seated ourselves. This room, as we afterwards discovered, served the purposes of kitchen,

parlour, and taproom in one. Beyond it, on the same floor, there were only two small bedrooms and a large pantry, all opening out of a passage which was lighted at the other end by a small grated window; over it there was a loft or lumber-room, open to the rafters, and only to be reached by means of a ladder through a trap-door, in one corner of the kitchen. The strong homely furniture was, with one exception, made of plain deal, scoured to an exceeding whiteness; this exception was a quaint black oak chest, about six feet long, which stood in a corner near the fire—a chest covered with carved work of fruit and flowers, and fanciful arabesques, and interlaced letters repeated again and again; and which at once brought to my mind the old song of *The Mistletoe Bough*, and the story of *Francesca in Rogers's Italy*.

The landlord entered in a few minutes, having duly attended to the requirements of my mare, a matter which I verified by personal inspection later in the evening.

'You don't live here all alone, landlord?' said I interrogatively.

'No, sir, not commonly,' he replied. 'But my old woman and the girl went down this morning into Overbarrow to do their bit of marketing; and there they're likely to stop till the roads are open again.'

These words did not convey a very reassuring prospect to the American and myself.

'Have you got anything in the house you can give us for supper, landlord?'

'Nothing, sir, but a rasher of bacon, some eggs, or a Welsh-rabbit; and some middling home-brewed ale.'

We gave our orders accordingly; and speaking for myself, I may say that I never enjoyed a meal more heartily in my life. After supper was over—dinner and supper in one—the landlord, with a sly smile, produced from some secret recess a brown stone bottle full of prime old rum; and then, having seen us fairly at work with our meerschaums, and having heaped up a tremendous fire, he solicited leave to retire for the night; and, mounting the ladder, disappeared through the trap-door, having arranged the two little bedrooms, to the best of his ability, for the accommodation of his unexpected guests.

After the landlord's departure, we sat for some time drinking and smoking in silence. My companion looked pale and haggard, and I noticed that once or twice he pressed his hand to his forehead, as if in pain. 'Are you ill?' I said to him at length.

'Not ill exactly, *ami*,' he replied with a melancholy smile. 'It's the shadow of an old pain that comes over me at odd times—a bagatelle—not worth talking about!'

Grave and taciturn as two Indians, we sat smoking for another space; at length the American laid down his pipe, got up, and began to pace restlessly about the room; suddenly he stopped in the middle of the floor. 'I will not think about it!' he exclaimed, grinding out the words from between his clenched teeth; and next moment he burst into a jovial students' song, trolling out the verses at the top of his powerful voice, and winding up with a wild Ha-ha chorus; waking unwonted echoes in the old house, till the night-capped landlord popped his head for a moment through the cavernous opening in the roof, doubtful, perhaps, as to the sanity of one or both of his guests.

'That has done me good, mister,' said Nettlefold, as he came and sat down and resumed his pipe. 'I'm in a queer humour to-night. I must talk. *Le diable le veut*. So I'll tell you of a fight I once had with a grisly among the Rocky Mountains.'

'Good,' I replied, 'Let us have it, by all means; nothing better for a long winter's night.'

So Nettlefold proceeded to tell the story of his fight with the bear; and when that was done, went on to relate one wild story of frontier and Indian life after another, as fast as he could tell them; as though,

like the Ancient Mariner, a spell were on him which he could not resist; and, finally, he finished up the evening by reciting from memory *The Hunting of Pau-Puk-Keewis* (if I heard the gentleman's name correctly) from Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.

'And now to bed,' he said, as he stood up and yawned. 'Rouse me betimes in the morning, for I'm somewhat of a sluggard; and let us have an early breakfast, and try to make our way through the snow to some civilised part of the world.'

He shook me by the hand, bade me a hearty good-night, took up a candle, and lounged off into one of the little bedrooms which opened out of the passage leading to the back of the house. For myself, I declined having anything to do with the other chamber; it was too small and stuffy to suit my taste; and I had decided to take up my quarters for the night on the old carved chest, and at once proceeded to put my intentions into practice. Before settling myself for the night, I took a last glance through the window. The wind was hushed by this time, and the snow had ceased to fall; a clear cold night, full of promise for the morrow. Comforting myself with this reflection, I pushed the carved chest closer to the fire, and having laid down my black bag to serve for a pillow, and wrapped a couple of travelling rugs round me, I blew out the flaring tallow-candle, gave a last look to the fire, and in five minutes more had sunk into a heavy dreamless sleep.

When I awoke, it was still night; the fire had died down to a bed of glowing embers, which diffused a dim ruddy light around, sufficient to render the room and its furniture clearly visible, while leaving the corners in partial shadow. I awoke suddenly, with a sense of horror upon me such as no nightmare had ever inspired me with; and in my first waking moment could not call to mind the place in which I was; but a second glance round brought all the circumstances of the day to my recollection. I attempted to move, to get up, but found that I could not do so; I was perfectly helpless; and casting my eyes along the length of my body, I saw, with the most intense astonishment, that I was fastened down by a thick cord, wrapped round me again and again, to the carved chest on which I had made my bed for the night. Who had done this? and for what purpose?

Though my arms and legs were strapped tightly down, my chest was left sufficiently free to enable me to turn my head readily from side to side, and thus see everything in the room except what might be immediately behind me.

For a moment or two, I imagined myself to be alone, but on turning my head more fully to the right, I saw that I was mistaken. On the large folding-table which stood close under the window of the room, was squatted a figure so strange, so hideous, that in those first waking moments it might not unnaturally have been taken as the self-created illusion of a brain diseased. But not for long could I repress the conviction that the grim, dark, silent figure before me was as much a reality, as much a being of flesh and blood as myself; and gradually, as I looked more earnestly, the clear-cut aquiline features of Nettlefold seemed to evolve themselves familiarly out of the hideously grotesque mask with which they were overlaid. Yes, it was certainly my American friend, and no one else; but in what a costume!

As far as I could judge, he had divested himself of every article of civilised costume usually worn by him, except a red woollen shirt; over this he now wore a gaudy and luminous red and blue travelling rug, in which he had cut two holes for his arms, and which was fastened across his chest with an iron skewer, which he had picked up somewhere in the house; and held round the waist by a gay scarf, in which were stuck a revolver, a tomahawk, and a murderous-looking bowie-knife. His feet were covered with a pair of Indian moccasins, which I remembered

to have seen him wear as slippers on the previous evening; and in his long black tangled hair he had stuck a couple of peacock's feathers, taken from over the chimney-pieces of the little bedroom. But the most singular feature of his transformation remains to be told. Having found a quantity of yellow paint in some odd corner of the house, he had daubed a circle round each eye, and marked an elaborate pattern with it on his face and neck, which gave him, in that half light, a horribly weird and grotesque appearance. Finally, he was sitting cross-legged on the table gravely smoking a long-stemmed pipe of red clay.

But what struck a colder chill to my heart than anything else was to see the hard, cruel, murderous look in these black glittering eyes bent so steadily and persistently on me; it seemed to me as though my pleasant new-found friend had suddenly died, and that some wandering fiend from the nethermost regions, finding the empty shell, had crept into it, and now mocked me with a horrible semblance of him who was no more.

'Nettlefold, what means this fool's trick?' I said at length. 'Release me at once. The joke has been carried far enough.'

He neither smiled nor spoke, only answered me by that steady unwavering gaze from his cruel black eyes. In spite of myself, my heart sank deeper within me, and I could not help betraying my anxiety when I next spoke.

'Come, release me; there's a good fellow,' I said. 'The joke is an admirable one, no doubt, but, upon my life, I can't see the point of it! Release me, sir; do you hear? or, by Heaven, you shall pay for it when I am free again!'

Still no answer, no light of recognition from those fiendish eyes. Instead of making any further appeal in words, I determined to try the effect of my own strength; but after a long and desperate struggle to break away from my bonds, I sank back breathless and exhausted, only more firmly bound than I had been before.

Turning my head, after a time, in the opposite direction, I saw with surprise, for I had not noticed it before, that the ladder which gave access through the trap-door to the loft was no longer there, so that all means of communication between the two rooms were removed; but whether the ladder had been taken away by Nettlefold or by the landlord, I had no means of judging. While thus looking, I saw, and the sight made me give a start of surprise, the white face of Mattinson peering down on us through the trap-door. He, at all events, was safe for the present, and in some measure free. My start of surprise did not escape the vigilant eyes of the American; his glance, following mine, saw the face in a moment; the next, his revolver was out, and a bullet went crashing into the framework of the door, missing the landlord's head by a hairbreadth only. The American, with a guttural 'Ugh!' of disappointment, put back his revolver into his belt, and resumed his pipe without another word.

A horrible conviction had been gradually forcing itself on my mind, and now I could struggle against it no longer—Mr Jabez Y. Nettlefold of New York was undoubtedly mad. There could be no question on the point, for on that supposition, and that alone, could his extraordinary conduct be accounted for. The shot fired at Mattinson, who, as far as I knew, had offended him neither in word nor deed, enlightened me as to the extent of my own danger, which only needed a glance at the fiend-like expression in his eyes to receive confirmation most complete. As I lay there, bound and helpless, I had time to imagine all that was likely or unlikely to happen to me; time enough to summon up whatever of fortitude or patience I possessed to meet with calmness the fate which loomed so closely before me. My young life, with all its ambitions, fears, hopes, and

jealousies, about to come to a sudden and ignoble conclusion in a lonely country inn, far away from all who knew or loved me?

How long I had lain thus, whether hours or minutes only, nursing these bitter thoughts, I cannot tell, when I was roused by a movement on the part of the American. He put down his pipe, leaped off the table, and seizing a great log of wood, threw it on the fast-decaying embers; then taking his bowie-knife out of his belt, he deliberately proceeded to sharpen it on the hearthstone. When the edge was to his mind, he went back to his seat on the table, and fixing me again with his relentless eye, addressed me as follows: 'Dog of a pale-face, listen! Once I was a white man like thee, but a Great Spirit came to me as I lay asleep—whence he came, and what was his name, I cannot tell, for on these points my mind is confused—and he laid on my brow a finger that seemed to scorch and wither up my brain; and he said to me: "Arise, and go back to the wigwams of thy people, for thou art not a pale-face. Many moons ago, thy fathers dwelt on the prairies, and fished in the great lakes, and hunted the buffalo, and were braves among the red-men, and their blood runs in thy veins. Get thee hence, and take with thee the scalps of as many white men as shall be given into thy hands; so shalt thou be honoured among thy people, and thy name shall be Soan-ge-taha, the Strong-hearted." And when the Spirit had done speaking, he put his hand into my bosom, and plucked out my heart of flesh, and put into its place a smooth flint stone, worn and polished by the action of the waves; and he said: "Pity and fear shall be alike unknown to thee. Go; and the first white man on whom thine eyes shall rest after waking, his scalp shalt thou assuredly take to decorate the poles of thy wigwam, when thou reachest the homes of thy people on the wide prairies of the west!" Stranger, thine was the first face that my eyes rested on after waking. When morning breaks in the east, then shall I set out on the long journey before me, and thy scalp shall go with me. Wagh!'

I could not keep back the little sigh, half a sigh and half a sob, that burst irrepressibly from my heart as he finished speaking. There could be no doubt now as to the fate in store for me. O bitter, bitter for life's bright dream to end so suddenly in utter darkness! So young, too; and ah, so unfitted to die! I shut my eyes, and my soul seemed to be sinking down through endless depths of night to where no voice could ever comfort me—no friendly hand succour me—to the shadowless realms of death. But, hark! what was that? The low, quivering sound of a human voice, weak and uncertain at first, but gathering strength as it went on; neither very sweet nor very skilful, but full of earnestness, and touched with a solemnity and depth of feeling that appealed directly to the heart. It was the poor deformed landlord of the lonely country inn singing a quaint, old-world psalm, learned probably at the little church among the Fells. Coming at such a time, it brought tears into my eyes, and lifted me out of the depths of that terrible despair, and gave me strength to look my fate more calmly in the face.

Seven o'clock striking by the little cuckoo-clock in the corner. Where have I been, and what has happened to me? It was not a dream, then? Alas! no, for I am still bound hand and foot to the chest; but my limbs, where the cords have cut into them, have lost all feeling by this time, and are like the limbs of a dead man. I have been unconscious of my position for the last few minutes, unconscious of everything except some vague, blessed dream of home, the home I shall never see more. Still grim and immovable, hideous as some Indian idol, with his yellow-painted face, Nettlefold sits as before. Another half hour, and daylight will be here, and then—

This thought was still lingering in my brain, when the American laid down his pipe, stepped on to the floor, and going to one corner of the room, brought from thence some short pieces of cord, which had evidently been cut and laid ready for the purpose for which he now required them. With these he tied my ankles firmly together, and fastened down my arms close to my sides; then cutting the longer cords which had bound me to the chest, he lifted me up lightly, as though I were a child, and set me upright against the door of a large cupboard which reached from the floor almost to the ceiling, and filled up a recess on one side of the fireplace. Then passing a longer cord across my chest and under my arms, he fastened one end of it to a large hook in the wall, and the other to one of the iron bars that guarded the window. Fixed thus, it was impossible for me to stir; indeed, had my ankles been free, I could not have walked an inch, so numb and dead were they through having been so tightly bound for so long a time. 'Truly,' I thought, 'my last moment on earth is at hand.'

The American retired a few paces, to contemplate the effect of his handiwork, and something like a gleam of satisfaction lighted up his murderous eyes as he looked at me. He then walked slowly backward till he reached the opposite wall of the room, and drawing out his bowie-knife, he felt its blade with his finger for a moment, then quickly raising his arm, he flung the knife with deadly aim, straight at me as it seemed. Involuntarily, I shut my eyes, and the same instant the blade whizzed past my left ear, and buried itself in the soft wood of the door a few inches from my neck. I breathed again, and opened my eyes. The American uttered a solemn guttural 'Wagh!' of satisfaction, and drew his tomahawk from his belt. I would not close my eyes this time, but setting my teeth firmly together, kept my glance bent on him, though my heart seemed to stop its beating while I gazed; and next instant the tomahawk came rushing through the air, and crashed into the cupboard door, a few inches to the right of my throat. Again the American gave utterance to the same singular sign of satisfaction as before. I had scarcely time to wonder at my second escape, before I saw him draw his revolver from his belt, and take a sort of rapid half-aim at me. 'All over with me this time!' I muttered to myself; but even as the words escaped me, I felt the wind of the bullet among my hair, and knew that I was safe for the third time.

'One!' said the madman gravely, as his arm went up again to the line of fire; and then the second bullet stirred my hair, and buried itself in the door above my head. 'Two!' said the American sententiously, as he strapped his gaudy rug more closely around him. I now began to comprehend that, in accordance with Indian usage, this was intended as a sort of torture, preliminary to the grand catastrophe. Suppose he were to miss his aim? I whispered to myself. Why, even in that case, the end of the tragedy would but come a few minutes sooner; anyhow, he would doubtless tire in a very short time of playing with his victim, and would inflict the final coup, and so bring the business to an end.

But bullet number three brought my thoughts to an abrupt conclusion. In this case, I suppose, the shot swerved slightly from the line it was intended to take, as it came nearer than the previous ones had done, and carried with it a portion of my hair.

'Three!' said the American. 'Bad!'

Shots four, five, six, and seven rapidly followed; by which time my head was hemmed in, as it were, by a circle of bullets. When the last shot had been fired, Nettlefold crossed the room, drew his knife and tomahawk carefully out of the wood, and replaced them in his belt.

'Circle the first!' he said, protruding his hideous visage to within an inch of my own. 'Circle the

second will'— He did not finish his words, but nodded his head at me ominously three times, and then went back to his former place on the other side of the kitchen, and began to reload his revolver.

But hardly had he set about the operation, when both he and I were startled by hearing a low, weird voice outside the door calling him softly by name—a ghostly, passionless voice, without inflection or modulation of tone.

'Soan-ge-taha,' said the voice, 'Soan-ge-taha, cease what thou art about, and come hither!'

I could see the madman's face pale under the paint with which it was smeared, and a sudden fear tremble in his eyes. Motionless and rigid as a statue, he stood listening for the voice to come again.

'Soan-ge-taha,' repeated the voice, 'brave son of the red-skins, why dost thou linger? The Great Spirit that visited thee in thy sleep gives thee a sacred hatchet. With it, thou shalt slay many white men. Come forth, and seek it where it has been laid ready to thy hand. Thou shalt find it in a sweet-smelling box of cedar-wood, in the straw-thatched shed close to the house. Soan-ge-taha, come—come!' and with a low wailing sound, the voice seemed to die gradually away in the distance.

It sounded so weird and unearthly in the gray stillness of early morning, that for my own part, perfectly unable to account for it as I was, I could not help feeling strangely thrilled and moved; as for the American, he looked like a man stricken by some mortal terror, with big drops of sweat standing on his brow, afraid to stir, and equally afraid to disobey the ghostly summons.

Again was the summons repeated in faint far-away accents: 'Soan-ge-taha, come—come—come!' The American dared disobey no longer. He laid his empty revolver gently on the floor, tightened the girdle round his waist, felt that his knife and tomahawk were ready to his hand in case of need; and then unbolting the heavy oak door, with a last scared and trembling, but half-suspicious glance at me, as though suspecting some treachery on my part, he opened the door, and slipped noiselessly out into the gray dawn.

Scarcely had the peacock's feather which decorated the head of Soan-ge-taha disappeared through the door, when, light and agile as an acrobat, the hump-backed landlord swung himself by a pendent rope through the trap-door of the loft to the ground. With a single bound he reached the open door, and in another instant it was shut and bolted against the madman. Not a word did he utter till, with wonderful rapidity, he had seen to the fastenings of every door and window in the house; then he gave vent to a smothered 'Hurrah!' and drawing a knife from his pocket, proceeded to cut the cords with which I was bound.

I could hardly believe in the reality of what I saw; the whole affair was so incomprehensible that, for some moments, I could regard it as nothing more than a wild vagary of my own over-wrought brain. But when I saw the cords fall at my feet, and felt that I was free, the sudden rush of happiness was more than I could bear; and I remember nothing more till I found myself lying on the carved chest again, with the landlord's friendly face bent over me while doing his best to bring back my scattered senses.

But the madman was back by this time, conscious that he had been made the victim of some trick; and the first sound that greeted my returning consciousness was a ferocious yell of mingled rage and despair, which burst from his lips as he flung himself against the stout old door, which quivered visibly under the shock, but refused to give way. Finding his efforts of no avail, he next tried his strength against the windows; but they were even more impervious to his attacks than the door had been, being grated with iron bars, and further secured inside by stout wooden

shutters. Then, in a red-hot fury of raging madness, he tried, one after another, every door and window that opened into the house; but they had been too well secured by the vigilant landlord to afford any chance of ingress. Baffled at every point, the madman's rage found vent in a series of terrific yells, mingled with curses and threats of direst vengeance against both of us. Then, for a time, everything was still, and we breathed more freely.

'But how did it all happen, Mattinson?' I said after a time. 'I confess I can't understand it at all. And that mysterious voice, which chilled me to the very marrow, can you explain what that was?'

'Easily enough, sir. The voice you heard was my voice.' Seeing my stare of astonishment, he went on, with a little laugh: 'You see, sir, this is how it was. When I was a young fellow, I was servant to a well-known conjurer and ventriloquist, and travelled up and down the country with him. After a time, I found out, quite by chance, as I was trying to imitate him one night, that I possessed in quite uncommon perfection the ventriloquial faculty. I practised it a good deal after that entirely for my own amusement, though there were not wanting people who said I might have made my fortune by it had I been so inclined. Be that as it may, however, I grew heartily sick of that vagabond sort of life after a while; and as my old woman, whom I was courting at that time, refused to have me unless I would settle down at home again, why, I did what I have never regretted doing—I sacrificed fortune for happiness, and here I am.—Well, sir, when I woke, some time in the night, up there in the loft, where I was sleeping comfortably enough on a shake-down, I heard some curious noises below, which induced me to get up cautiously, and look through the trap. There I saw you fastened down on the chest, and that rampaging painted devil standing over you, and laughing like some hyena gone mad. With that, I quietly pulled up the ladder, thinking he might perhaps want to serve me the same way next. A minute or two later, you opened your eyes, and you know what happened after that as well as I do; only you don't perhaps know that after that madman shot at me, I found a little crack in the floor, just over where you lay, through which I could see and hear everything without being seen myself. When he was firing at you in that bloodthirsty way, I was all in a quake of pity and terror, not seeing any way by which I could help you in the least; for to have ventured out of the loft with no weapon but a little pocket-knife, would have been merely sacrificing my own life without doing you the least good; when suddenly it flashed across my mind—and it was more like a flash of light from Heaven than anything else—to try the effect of my old powers of ventriloquism, which had indeed grown somewhat rusty for want of use. The thought was not well out of my head before I spoke as you heard; and words seemed given to me in a wonderful way, of which I had never any experience before, as if something above and beyond me were speaking through my lips. And now he's outside, trying his best to get in again; but I don't think he'll manage it. Hark! he's at the window again.'

Nettlefold, in fact, came back at that moment, and again tried his utmost to effect an entrance both at back and front, breaking the silence every now and then with a true madman's yell, more terrible to hear than even a genuine Indian whoop.

After a time, when all was silent again, Mattinson climbed up into the loft, and making a watch-tower of the window in its sloping roof, from that elevated position reported to me the progress of the siege. He had not been long at his post before he reported that the American had just entered the stable, which stood a short distance from the house; a minute or two later, mounted on the bare back of my mare, and with nothing but a halter to guide her, Nettlefold

galloped out of the yard, and flinging a parting yell at the house and its inmates, disappeared at a headlong pace down the white road.

We kept within doors all day, thinking that the departure of the American might be merely a ruse to draw us from our retreat. Towards nightfall, a company of a dozen people, among them our landlord's wife and daughter, all came up together from Overbarrow, whom we welcomed to our temporary prison with thankful hearts. The same evening, by the favour of a kindly farmer, who undertook to drive me over, I found myself at Hawthorpe Hall.

Before the following morning, the storm, which had been threatening for several days, came down in earnest, and was remembered as one of the most terrible which had been known in those parts for many years. Six weeks later, when the thaw came on, the bodies of Nettlefold and my mare were found at the foot of a precipice among the hills, over which they had gone headlong in the storm. Papers found among the effects of the American enabled us to communicate with his friends. From what we learned subsequently, it would appear that he had at one time been confined in a private lunatic asylum, but had ultimately been discharged as cured; that his insanity was supposed to have been occasioned in part from a blow on the head received during a frontier skirmish, and in part from disappointment and wounded self-love, at being jilted by a beautiful Indian girl with whom he had fallen in love during his wanderings. His friends were wealthy, and they took him—sleeping his last sleep—across the Atlantic, to rest in the grave of his fathers. Peace to his memory!

As for Mattinson, he is now, thanks to the generosity of my then prosperous employer, the landlord of the *Rose and Crown*, the largest and best known inn within twenty miles of Hawthorpe.

By the time Mr Watkins's story was concluded, the morning was far advanced. Nothing could be more wretched than the aspect of the jury-room as the early sun poured in through the ghastly window, making the white walls blush as if for their nakedness. Mooney was, of course, asleep; Quiverful had forgotten his domestic anxieties in an uneasy slumber; and Simperton was enjoying broken snatches—homœopathic doses of sleep, from which he every now and then awoke to exclaim 'Bravo!' 'Very good!' in tribute to the talents of the narrator for the time being. The rest of us were awake, and although far from comfortable, as resolute as ever. We felt that we were right in our intended verdict, but above all we felt that Crasket was wrong. As for the iron merchant, he was still as obstinate as George III., but it was evident that his constitution was not what he had boasted it to be. His face was pallid, and drawn down in gutters like a wasted tallow-candle; and when he spoke, his voice sounded as hollow and sepulchral as the tones in which the ghosts of Professor Pepper are accustomed to address the shuddering public.

'How many more of these childish stories are we going to have?' inquired he.

'Just as many as the foreman thinks proper,' returned Sunnyside gaily. 'I have written down the heads of some half-dozen narratives myself, and Mr Winkard here, he has been doing the same.'

'As for me,' remarked the supercargo, 'I'm just as choke-full o' narration as a pumpkin is of seed.'

'Moreover,' said I, 'only five of us have yet favoured the company; and the other seven should be taken in order, as they sit, before our second batch comes on. It is Mr Mooney's turn now, for

example, and probably, after his prolonged rest, his intellect will be fresh and vigorous.'

'Stop!' cried Crasket in an awful voice; 'don't wake that man. I wish to say a few words, once for all. I have suffered much—it is useless to conceal it—through this last night, and I am supremely wretched at this moment. No narrative from Mr Mooney—no, nor from even Simperton—could make me much worse. All these stories have been told, I am well aware, to exhaust me, to wear me out: well, I'm not to be exhausted; I'm not to be worn out. Still, as I said before, if a single genuine instance can be brought forward—the scene not being laid in Yucatan—of an honest individual in possession of a stolen five-pound note, and'—

'Bob knows one,' interrupted Mr William Rooster.

'Bill knows one,' echoed Mr Robert.

'I don't want two instances,' returned Mr Crasket viciously; 'one is quite sufficient. If one can be adduced, I say, I will'—

'Well, you'll give in, Mr Crasket; come, that's right and fair enough.'

'No, sir; I'll eat my hat,' ejaculated the iron merchant savagely.

'And he *shall* too,' exclaimed the supercargo with shrill vehemence. 'If that story is told, and it don't convince that 'ere Crasket right off, and he don't come into our verdict pretty slick, I'll be *do-drotted* but he *shall* eat his hat, linin' and all.'

'Under these circumstances,' observed I gravely, 'it is especially necessary that there should be silence for Mr William'—

'No, sir; Bob, if you please—it's his story,' observed the individual in question.

'No, sir; it's Bill's,' exclaimed Mr Robert.

'Then silence, gentlemen all, if you please,' said I, 'for

THE MESSRS ROOSTER'S STORY.

There was silence for some considerable time, except for a whispered colloquy between the two cousins as to which was to undertake the responsibility of relating their joint narrative; this was eventually put an end to by the simple intervention of a halfpenny, which coming down 'Tails,' whereas Mr William had cried 'Heads,' that gentleman, without further altercation, commenced as follows.

'Well, gentlemen, the story is not my story, nor yet Bob's after all; it's our Aunt Sarah's story, and true, as I sit here, from first to last. She has often told it us, and I will tell it to you in her own words, which will be easier to me than in any other way, totally unaccustomed as I am to public—I mean, to literary composition.

It was not my first situation, but I was in a manner new to service, and only eighteen when I went to live with a family in Kilburn. Their name was Nutley. They were very respectable people—in their ways and doings, I mean: the master was head-clerk in a great City house, and had a pretty fair income; but the family was large; there were ten children, the eldest not above my own years, and the youngest quite a baby. So they had to look at a shilling before they spent it. Making ends meet, in a close, genteel way, was just as much as they could do; but they did it: every tradesman was regularly paid; the misses and all the children were plainly but respectably dressed; there was no penury in the house; but it

was carefully managed: nothing too much allowed, and everything well looked after, from the coal-cellar to the tea-canister. I suppose it was to get a genteel place cheap that brought them out to Kilburn. It's a new neighbourhood yet, but was far newer then: a dozen houses or so scattered along the high-road after one passed the turnpike, with fields and building-ground between them; every house standing alone, shut in its own garden, and the place near enough to Paddington for the tramps and ill-doers, that were never scarce there, to come out and look about them. There was need for locking of doors and bolting of windows, when the long nights came on, and one did not see a policeman often. But the houses had been built on speculation, they said, for a richer class of people, who did not take them; and on account of the loneliness—I am speaking of ten years ago, when Kilburn was thought the world's end, in a manner—they let them at uncommon low rents, considering the number of rooms and the garden-ground they had back and front. It was a long way for the master going to the City every morning, and only one omnibus: if he happened to miss it, there was nothing but walking to the Marble Arch in all weathers. But Mrs Nutley liked the place, it was so private and genteel; and I believe master had taken it through her persuasion.

She was a small, thin woman, with a sharp look in her eyes, and rather withered and careworn, considering her time of life, for she was not forty then; but they said she had been grandly brought up, though without fortune, by a titled lady in the West End, who was her aunt, and would have adopted her, for she was an orphan; but in becoming Mrs Nutley, she had made a mistake of her own choosing. The titled lady could not acknowledge the head-clerk, of course; and her niece was cast off on his account; but never forgetting what she had been in her young days, Mrs Nutley's whole endeavour was to keep up a fine appearance, and associate with nobody but the best and grandest she could get at. For the one reason, her house was perfectly kept; for the other, she had few acquaintances. The children were mostly all girls—I have noticed that always happens in pinched families—three boys out of the ten, and they the youngest. The whole family were like their mother, no great beauties; and rather thin and pale, in spite of the clear air that blew over their home from Cricklewold and Hampstead Heath. It might have been owing to their strict bringing-up: there was very little play, and no humours allowed in that house. Mrs Nutley's word was law, and to make them genteel, appeared to be her only consideration; and they were kept mighty close to lessons, partly by herself, partly by masters, old and severe ones, who came to teach music, drawing, French, and I don't know what else, three times a week. They were giving the girls a good education, that they might get their own living; there was no other prospect before them, you see.

Mr Nutley was out every morning by eight o'clock, and never in till seven in the evening, except on Sundays; but he liked gentility too, and looked thin and careworn with keeping it up, as the heaviest end of the burden fell on him. He was a tall handsome man, with a fair complexion and dark hair, and might have been a beau among the ladies before he got married, and had ten children, which is enough to make sober-sides of any man. But every child in the house liked him far better than their mother, was glad at his home-coming, and missed him when he happened to stay late at business. We did not wonder at it—I mean, the cook and myself; that was all the servants they kept, and we had plenty to do, I can tell you. The plain truth was, that missis had master under petticoat government, as the men call it; she got the handle of him somehow when they were first married, kept it over after, and governed house and family,

may be on account of her having been niece to a titled lady and seen high company. At anyrate, she had the rule of them all. A strict mistress, I must say, but not a hard one; and whether it was that I suited her particularly, and did not grumble over stints, as the cook was apt to do, Mrs Nutley took a sort of liking to me as much as she could have, I suppose, for any servant; used to send me on her special errands to get things cheap in Paddington; used to trust me with candles about the house after nightfall; with the shutting up of doors and windows—she always sent the master, however, to see that they were all right at the last minute—used to give me the keys of the cupboards sometimes when she went out, which was not often, except to church, and tell me little family affairs when I was taken into the back-parlour to help in the mending and making for the children, which was mostly done at home.

There was a good deal of that kind to do, as you may suppose; and as I could sew pretty well, and always made myself tidy in the afternoon, I was many an hour in the room with her, and spoken to quite familiar like, though I hope it did not make me forget my place. The missis was not a lady to let one forget it, however friendly she might be with one. I am sure it was nothing but pure loneliness that made her talk to me, for no lady could have less company in her own house. Her husband was out all day, and came home tired in the evening; her big girls were busy getting ready to be governesses, and teaching the little ones. They were said to be clever at learning, and I know they spent time enough at it; but whether it was their strict bringing-up, or their natural backwardness that made them so, they were every one childish and simple in common affairs, and one might as well have talked to a baby as to Miss Charlotte, the eldest daughter. She was quite ready to go out as a governess, if a situation in a titled family could be got for her. Her mother would hear of nothing less, neither would the young lady, for that matter. Though there was not an ounce of their mother's sense and management among them, the whole seven girls had got her ambition to be fine and grand, and never forgot that their grand-aunt was Lady Dangerfield of Belgrave Square. Anyhow, Mrs Nutley found little company in them; and I could not help thinking she fretted night and day over the grandeur she had thrown herself out of—that is the way with most people who do the like: it made her withered and careworn before the time, as much as keeping up appearances and making ends meet, and it did more harm to her mind. There was a side-window in the back-parlour; and out of it one could see through the garden paling all that passed on the high-road without being seen. There Mrs Nutley used to sit in her dark print morning-dress, sewing and darning most of the day, while the master was at business, and the girls at lessons; and when well-dressed people or carriages went by to the villas owned by rich retired tradesmen, the poor lady looked ready to burst with spite and envy. She never said a word at those times, and I never liked to look at her face, but I saw it often enough for all that, and the more fine dresses and carriages that passed, Mrs Nutley was in the worse humour. It was uncommonly bad one day in the middle of my second quarter, when the neighbours were going off all in their airs, you may be sure, to one of the summer flower-shows at Chiswick. The baby wouldn't go to sleep at its usual hour, so my mistress had it in her lap, and it had got a rattle; and while missis was looking out with her nose to the pane, to get a better sight, the child ran its rattle right through the glass, and there was a window to be mended. Of course, her gentility could not put up with having it broken, because people could see it over the garden paling. She sent me to Paddington the same evening, where the nearest painter and glazier lived; but he knew the Nutleys'

jobs were small, and happened to be busy at better work. I was put off one day after another with promises that he would come or send his man next morning, but neither of them ever came, and missis could not sit at the broken window.

It had been in that state for a week and more, when one morning, as I was doing the steps and sweeping down the path in the front-garden, a man came to the open gate, walked straight up to me, and said: "You have got a window to mend here, and I am a travelling glazier." Nobody would have taken him for one, if they hadn't seen the frail at his back. The man's picture is fixed in my memory; I would know him among a thousand, partly on account of what happened, and partly from his own remarkable appearance. He was a tall thin man, very straight, and very dark in the complexion; his hair was mostly gray, but it had been very black; his face was long and skinny, without a bit of whisker, every hair clean shaved off; he had a hooked nose, thin flat lips, and such a pair of eyes!—they were the most wonderful thing about him, and the worst-looking too. I never knew what colour they were; but you have seen the eyes of a cat while she is watching a mouse—well, they looked like that—steady, keen, and cunning, with a kind of bad courage in them. I never saw such eyes before, and I don't want to see them again. He was going to pass me, and walk right into the house, for I stood hesitating about letting him in, though the window did want mending. "Stop," says I, "till I tell the missis;" and I thought it but right to close the street-door behind me, though it was nearly in his face. Mrs Nutley herself had seen him out of the back-parlour. "I don't like the looks of the man," said she; "but Johnson is not coming, and I am positively ashamed of this broken pane; let him mend it; he can't do any harm, for I shall be sewing here. Tell him to come in, and I will see what he charges."

I shewed the glazier into the room; and I heard the missis making a stiff bargain with him in her usual way; he wanted sixpence more than she was willing to give, but they split the difference at last, and he fell to the glazing. Being about the garden, I thought it right to keep an eye on the man, and partly I couldn't help it, he was so remarkable. I thought he spent a good deal of time about the window too; but Mrs Nutley sat sewing at the other all the time, and by degrees I noticed that there was more talk between her and the glazier than one could have expected. It was by their movements I knew it, and not by their voices, for they were speaking low. She had not liked the looks of the man, and appeared never to have seen him before; but when he was done and paid and gone about his business, I saw her looking after him anxious and concerned like; and when I mentioned his queer looks again, she gave me something very like a lecture against being prejudiced by people's appearances.

The window was mended well enough, and the man seemed to have charged little enough for it; I heard no reflection on that score, and to this day I can't tell how it was made plain to me; missis never said the like, but somehow I knew that she would not be displeased to see another window broken, and have the glazier back. He passed the house sometimes, but never looked at it—that man could see without looking, you understand. The cook and myself were set to clean the windows oftener than we used to. Poor soul! she was rather unlucky with glass; and had a young man at the time, who was behaving ill to her, that rather confused her mind, which was not very clear at the best, except on cooking business, and kept her from noticing anything particular that might be going on in the house. It also kept me from remarking anything about the glazier to her. Minds confused in that way are not to be trusted; but though she broke many a pane at other times,

and had to pay for them, the glass escaped under her hands then; and we would not have had a broken window in the house, if the baby had not put its rattle through the back-parlour one day, just as the glazier was going by. Missis sent me out for him directly; it was such a lucky chance to get the window mended out of hand. He did not seem very glad of the job; but in he came, and fell to work. Missis sent away the child, shut the door particularly close, took up her sewing; and they must have talked there for a good while, for when the pane was in, and I dusting the drawing-room, there was a continual whisper going on in the back-parlour. You see the partition was only lath and plaster, and I am not sure there were not chinks in it under the paper. There is no use in saying I didn't try to listen—very few would not under the circumstances—but not a word could I catch, only the constant whisper going on between them; and I noticed, what doesn't generally happen, that the man spoke the most. What on earth could Mrs Nutley have to say in that confidential manner to the travelling glazier, whose first looks she didn't like, as nobody in their right senses could? She was a very proper woman, and he no beauty, or, goodness knows, I would have had a bad notion of them. While I was wondering what it would be, and dusting the window-frame, I heard the outer door quietly closed behind somebody, and there was the glazier walking away from the house in no great hurry, and laughing to himself in a kind of wicked scorn.

After that we had no want of broken windows—the baby put its rattle, the little boys their books, and the young ladies their elbows through them, all by accident of course; but such smashing of glass was never known; and what astonished me more, there was no scolding for it. When the windows were broken, they had to be mended; and Mrs Nutley found there was no use in sending to Johnson in Paddington; he would never come when he was wanted; but the travelling glazier was always passing that way, always brought in, always set to work; and whether it was up stairs or down, Mrs Nutley had always to be there with her sewing, and it was an understood matter that the door should be fast shut, and nobody allowed to enter the room. Busy as they were with their lessons, and heedless of everything else, the young ladies looked after that; and I noticed that while the glazier stayed, there was always one of them on the watch, ready to speak for mamma, and keep us servants out of hearing. There were other doings in the house that puzzled me and amazed the cook, if anything, except her young man, could do it. We had been accustomed to nothing but genteel economy—plain cheap living; every penny counted, and nothing expensive thought on; but that was all over. By such slow degrees, that I can't say when it began, poultry, game, and all manner of good things, as sure as they came in season, were bought, and that at the best prices. Mrs Nutley appeared to grudge nothing for the table; they had salmon at two-and-sixpence a pound, turtle-soup, and vegetables forced in hot-beds. The money did not go in that direction only: from the eldest to the youngest, every one of the family got new dresses, fine fashionable things bought in Regent Street; such bonnets as the young ladies had direct from Paris, and quite overtopping all the neighbours Mrs Nutley used to look out at! By the by, she sat no more sewing in the back-parlour, but always up in the drawing-room, dressed in style, and reading novels, or taking the young ladies out for walks or drives, for they had a carriage engaged to come to their door every afternoon. I'll never forget the pride and glory of the whole lot when it first came, and four of them got into it. But the thing became common. They drove round Rotten Row and Hyde Park; they went to visit their friends, and I suppose astonished them;

they went to the theatres, to the opera, to the flower-shows, in short, to all places of amusement, and never stinted or grumbled over what it cost them. I couldn't help thinking that somebody had died, and left them a surprising legacy; but in the midst of all the gay doings, Mr Nutley still went regularly to business, still came home as late, and was manifestly nothing but the head-clerk he had always been. Mrs Nutley said nothing to account for the wonderful outlay, but she conversed very little with me now. We were not on the old friendly terms, though I had done nothing to displease her, and she found no fault with me. There was no sewing together in the back-parlour, missis being above that; and you can't imagine how high and grand she had grown in her airs and ways of talking. All the young ladies followed her example; but the grandeur and the extravagance did not make the house a bit more comfortable; it was a great deal less so. Between the eternal cooking, dressing, and going out, things went at sixes and sevens from morning till night. We had late sittings-up for them to get home from the theatres, late breakfasts next morning, hot lunches, troublesome dinners, kept till Mr Nutley came back. He got into the habit of bringing men—gentlemen, I ought to say, though some of them looked queer, and wore uncommon pins and chains. They had the habit of sitting to all hours, playing cards, and drinking no end of brandy and water. It was terrible work. But all the unpleasantness was not in the kitchen. The family used to agree well when they had plain clothes, plain living, and one theatre-going at the Christmas-time; but now, there were everlasting disputes among them. Every one wanted something they could not or shouldn't have. Miss Charlotte thought her younger sisters too forward; they found out that she was jealous of them; there was always a quarrel when they got home from any place of amusement, or after the men with the rings and chains went away. Mrs Nutley's temper wasn't a bit improved, though she could now be as grand as the best of her neighbours. She could not get people of sufficient standing to visit or invite them, though she made some amazing parties: the best of her company sent apologies; they were asked without being well enough acquainted, you see. And the men Mr Nutley brought home drank so much, made such a noise, and broke so many glass and china things, that the people engaged from the pastrycook's called them a rum lot, and said there was nothing like high-life below stairs. The disagreeables did not end there. Mr and Mrs Nutley disputed as well as their children; I don't know whether it was about the men, the money, or the eternal going out, which he never relished, but quarrel and scold they did, late and early, before the family and between themselves; and I often overheard her saying, that the money all came through her, and she had a right to enjoy it.

You'll understand that about six months had gone in this fashion; I had made up my mind to look for another situation; I am not fond of changing; but between the work, and the unpleasantness, and the odd unaccountable ways their money came and went, I thought an honest girl might be better in a quieter house; and, to tell you the truth, I was looking about for a decent excuse to give warning—a civil one, if I could find it—for missis had a twelve-month's character to give. I had a right to a good one, though I say it myself; but ladies can say many a thing they wouldn't like to write when a servant is inquired after; and more than that, they owed me wages for the last two quarters. You'll think it curious, and so did I—though the case is not uncommon—that for all the money they spent, their tradesmen were not half so regularly paid as in the careful managing time, and the missis never had a penny when an account came in. So I was casting about how to get my wages and myself off quietly, and

intended to speak to Mrs Martin, a very honest respectable charwoman, though Irish, who had washed and scrubbed in all quarters of London from the time she left her good housemaid's situation to marry a cabman, who turned out no comfort, and ran away to Australia. Being acquainted in a great many good houses, she was likely to know of a situation that might suit me; and just at that time she came to help us in clearing up after one of the parties. It was a spring morning; Mrs Martin was scouring out the front area, when the glazier happened to pass, and I was sent to tell him he was wanted at the drawing-room window. As he went in, I came back to help her; but the look of Mrs Martin's face made me wonder what had happened. "Does he come here often?" said she, speaking low and frightened like.

"The glazier?" said I. "He is always here mending windows, the children break them so often. He is an odd-looking man. Do you know anything of him?" I knew Mrs Martin would speak the truth, and I would have gone miles to know what he and the missis had in hand.

"Well, all I know is, that any house would be better with broken windows than with his coming to mend them," said the charwoman. "What he is, or what he does besides glazing, I can't tell; but I have known him come to half-a-dozen houses, and never one of them that something strange and bad didn't happen. There was the Littles in Kensington, very respectable people, though rather pinched, till he began to mend their windows; then they got money, nobody knew how, but they got it, and spent it in all manner of finery; never had a day's comfort or quiet in the house, their own servants told me; never paid a tradesman; at last made a moonlight flitting one night, at the Michaelmas time; and I heard the police were looking for the master.—There were the Uptons at Stoke-Newington, respectable people, too, and not so poor, but a great deal more saving. They were a bachelor brother and three old maids, you understand. That man came to mend their windows, and they were ever after on the watch, as if for fear to be robbed; one of them wouldn't go out alone, nor the servant open the door after nightfall without all sorts of particularity; and when they had gone on that way for twelve months or so, one of them lost her senses, and the rest took her away, they said, to an asylum; but they never came back; the landlord and the tax-collector seized their furniture; and I heard the police were looking for the brother too.—There were the Welbies out at Brixton, young, new-married people, with little to begin on. He was in a lawyer's office; she did millinery in a private genteel way for a shop in Oxford Street; and they lived quiet and comfortable till the glazier came about them. After that, there was nothing but playgoing and company-keeping—bad company, I suppose, for the missis got talked about; and the master had to flee the country for embezzlement—that's the newspaper word for taking his employer's money.—It would take me a summer day to tell you of the people I have known him visit for no good, all respectable, and living in quiet places, just like this."

"What is his name, and where did he come from?" said I.

"I never heard any name for him but the Glazier. I don't know where he came from: goodness be about us, I don't want to know!" said the Irishwoman, crossing herself; "but my grandmother, who was a mighty wise woman, and lived in the County Limerick, used to say that if people were willing to sell their souls, there was one who could come in any shape to buy them.—Sarah, if you take my advice, you'll leave this place; no good will come to it since he has got in."

I thought her superstitious; but her news made

me the more willing to leave the Nutleys; and as Mrs Martin knew a respectable family in Bayswater who wanted a housemaid, we agreed that she should speak for me, and I should give warning on the following Monday, because that day completed my twelvemonth's service. The charwoman wanted me to say my mother was ill in the country, or something of that sort, for a civil excuse. "But no," said I; "truth's a diamond of the foremost water; I'll just say the work is too hard for me, as it is for any Christian, and you'll try to get me the place in Bayswater." I had need of some apology when Monday came and I gave the warning. Missis looked first as if something had frightened her; then, recovering herself, for she was a woman of great spirit, looked me hard in the face, and said: "Sarah, why do you wish to leave us? Is it higher wages you want?"

We were quite alone in the drawing-room, and a kind of tremor came over me at her hard look and keen question. But I kept composed, and said: "No, ma'am; but the work of the house is too hard for me, there is so much company; but I'll warrant you'll find a servant able and willing to do it."

"We all like you, Sarah," said she, growing very kind. "I would raise your wages, if that were any object, and, by the by, you have not been paid for the last two quarters. I can't just settle it now, but here is a five-pound note," and she pulled one out of her pocket; "you may want some things, but you must not think of leaving us."

"I do want some things, thank you, ma'am," said I, taking the money—it was well to get so much of my own anyhow—"but if you please, I must think of going; the work is too hard, and I would rather have a quieter place."

"Well, I'll endeavour to suit myself, and I hope you won't repent it, Sarah," said Mrs Nutley in her own sharp way.

"I hope not, ma'am," says I; and down stairs I went, glad enough that the job was done, and there was only the month of notice to put in with the Nutleys. In the meantime, the things missis had spoken of were wanted, now that the money was at last in my fingers; and I think it was on the next Friday—always an unlucky day that—I got time to go down to Anderson's shop in the Edgeware Road; it's there yet—a very good place for prints and common calicoes. I bought what I happened to want; it came to nearly thirty shillings, and they took it out of the note, and gave me change. I must tell you, missis had dealt at that shop before she got so grand, and could buy nowhere but in Regent Street; they were very obliging to her, and I had often got notes changed by them on her account. Of course, I thought things were as right as usual this time, and went home quite satisfied with the prints and calicoes I had bought. The same evening, Mrs Martin came to tell me that she had spoken of me to the Bayswater people, and I might apply on Monday forenoon, when the missis would be sure to be at home. I got my work done early, and got leave when Monday came, Mrs Nutley never asking where I was going, and not seeming to care; they had every one thrown me overboard in a manner since I gave warning; but off I went in full blow to get the place, Mrs Martin said it was such a good one. I was thinking of nothing but that as I went along, when, just at a place where I used to see the glazier coming forward walks a policeman, the only one I knew about Kilburn, and though he hadn't just paid me attentions, we were a sort of acquaintances, and used to pass civil remarks when we happened to meet.

"I am very sorry, Sarah," said he, coming right up, "but I must do my duty. You are the last young woman I would have expected the like to happen to. I was going to the house for you; but since you are here, it is the quietest way. You must come with me, and I'll return and break it to the family."

"What has happened to me? and what are you going to break?" said I, wondering if he had gone mad, and there was I on that lonely road with him.

"There is no use in denying it; I have got a warrant for you," said the policeman, pulling out his paper. "You are charged with being the accomplice of a gang of forgers: our inspector has been looking after them for some time; but you are the first we have caught; and if you take a friend's advice, Sarah, you will just tell all you know about it. They have worked so deep, and escaped so long, that the authorities will let you off easy for your information, and of course you'll repent," says he, laying his hand on my shoulder.

"A gang of forgers, and my information!" said I; "there must be some mistake, Mr Bidens."

"No mistake at all," said he. "You got a note changed at Anderson's in the Edgeware Road on Friday last; it was known at the bank to be a forgery; a good many more of the same kind have come through your hands; in short, we know you to be an accomplice of the gang. You must come along to the police station."

I went quietly with him—there was no use in anything else; but they did not keep me long at the office, for the magistrate was sitting, and I was taken before him at once. He asked me all about the note I had changed, and I told him. They shewed it to me, and I knew it instantly by a little mark in the corner. Of course, it was thought I knew more than that, and I was remanded; but Bidens—I must say he was friendly enough—came to encourage me in the station, saying they had got a clue that would bring the guilty parties to justice, and clear my character from all suspicion. The way he broke the news to the Nutleys, however, was taking the master and missis into custody that afternoon: the one at his place of business, and the other in her carriage, with three of the young ladies; but the warrant carried them as it did me to the police station, where, I am thankful to say, we were locked up separately. They were brought before the magistrate next morning; and the master confessed that he had been bribed and bought over to furnish specimens of his employer's handwriting, and that of the heads of other great houses, bankers and merchants, who corresponded with him, to an agent of the gang, by which it was believed their signatures had been forged to many cheques and bills. I need scarcely tell you that the agent was the glazier; he took the specimens, and he paid for them, but always in bank-notes, which were every one found to be forgeries too. How the Nutleys had escaped so long passing and changing them always appeared to me like a miracle, and the best of it was, they did not know what they were doing, but thought them good bank-paper. Well, to make a long story short, as I don't understand the roundabout ways of the law, a good many of the forgers were caught through the master's confession, and some of them were the men with the pins and chains; rogues and rascals in every way, as such folks commonly are. They were all transported for different terms. The Nutleys got off easier on account of turning Queen's evidence; and there was no substantial charge against missis, though I am sure it was she that began the game. Anyhow, the husband got six months' imprisonment, lost his situation, lost his character; and where the family went to avoid their tradesmen, I don't know, but their furniture was seized and sold, just as Mrs Martin had told me about the other families frequented by the glazier. They never caught him, though he was looked for far and near, and known to have been engaged in a hundred bad doings besides, always in the way of persuading and buying up people. Many a time the saying of Mrs Martin's grandmother has come to my mind when I happened to think of him, and I wish it had been a policeman that was in my

place about one year after. I had got discharged without a stain on my character, had got the Bayswater situation, and was comfortable in it, when one day going over the fields with the nurse and the five children to Kensal Green Cemetery, where their father was laid, I saw, in the quietest part of our way, a man sitting on the stile before us. He had no frail or glass at his back then, but was dressed like a Catholic priest, as near as I can say. I could not mistake him, however, and he did not mistake me, for the moment I came in sight, up he got, and off towards London, passing me with a sort of wicked smile; and, thank Providence, that was the last I ever saw of the Travelling Glazier.

'And do you mean to say, sir,' observed Mr Robert Rooster, addressing himself, directly his cousin had finished his narrative, to Mr Crasket, 'that our aunt Sarah was anything to blame in the matter, although she had got a five-pound note in her possession, which very nearly brought her into trouble?'

'No, sir,' said Mr Crasket graciously; 'I must say that she was entirely innocent; and I will add, that there is certainly some species of similarity between her case and that of Frederic Upton's.'

The iron merchant spoke with tolerable firmness, but I perceived that his eye wandered in the direction of the supercargo, whose glance, in his turn, was riveted upon Mr Crasket's hat.

'Come,' said I, 'this is well, Mr Crasket. Let us wake our three friends, and having agreed upon our verdict, come into court—for it is nine o'clock, and the judge will be here immediately—with our *Not Guilty*.'

The iron merchant still hesitated.

'It has a very broad, stiff brim,' remarked the supercargo reflectively.

'I think, upon the whole, I shall not be justified in holding out longer,' observed Mr Crasket rising.

He looked as battered and demolished as Fort Sumter after the ten thousand attentions of the ironclads; nor had he succumbed until after sixteen hours of story-shelling.

While the iron merchant was yet speaking, a tremendous cheer rang round the court-house, and was repeated again and again.

'They are cheering the judges,' said I; 'I feel as if I could cheer them myself. Come, let us go in.'

THE VERDICT.

The about-to-be-enfranchised eleven obeyed me cheerfully, and we trooped in all together, and took our places in the hateful Box. The counsel for the defence was speaking as we entered; and the judge replied: 'I am very sorry, Brother Silkins, but it cannot be helped; the case is closed, and the jury have come to their decision.'

The eyes of the vast assemblage were turned towards us with an interest much more intense than I had expected; they had been before as demonstrative in the prisoner's favour as they had dared to be, but it was clear that something had occurred in our absence to increase tenfold the popular desire for an acquittal.

Upton was standing in the dock, no longer passive and unmoved, but with a flushed and joyful face, as though he confidently expected to be released from his degrading position. Close to the dock stood Mary Underedge, bathed in tears, but still with an expression of serenity and satis-

faction quite different from that which she had worn on the previous day, when conveyed half fainting from the witness-box. By her side, and with her hand clasped in his, as if to reassure her, stood a young gentleman whom I had not seen before. The only troubled countenance was that of Richard Underedge, Mary's father; I saw him plainly, for, crowded as the place was, the people had withdrawn from him a little, such was their animosity against him, so that he stood alone; but even he looked confident, and saddened rather by some sorrow which had passed away, than with the shadow of impending calamity. It was evident that an acquittal was looked for everywhere—except by the judge upon the bench. He seemed to me to regard us with particular seriousness and gravity, as though we were but too likely to have come to an erroneous decision.

'Are you all agreed upon your verdict?'

'We are,' replied I firmly, but not daring to look at Crasket, for fear he should make some cantankerous opposition even at the very last.

'Is the prisoner at the bar "*Guilty*" or "*Not Guilty*?"'

The silence was so deep that I heard a bluebottle fly buzzing in the glass cupola of the court-house.

'Not Guilty,' returned I.

An uproarious cheer burst forth from the vast assemblage, and continued loud and long, in spite of the efforts of the ushers, and being carried along the passages and the courts without, themselves crowded with people, was taken up by the multitude in the street, who were unable to obtain admittance.

'My lud, may it please your ludship,' observed Serjeant Silkins, as soon as silence was restored, 'now that the jury have arrived at their decision, there can be no possible objection why the evidence of Mr Francis Morris?—'

'We can now receive no evidence, Brother Silkins, as you are well aware,' interrupted the judge smiling; 'but any statement which may render the innocence of your client more clear, than even the verdict to which we have just listened has done, may certainly, in the interests of justice, be made. If Mr Francis Morris can explain Upton's possession of the note in question, he will even yet not have arrived in this court too late, since the accused will leave the dock not only free, as now, but without the slightest imputation upon his character.'

A handsome young fellow, bronzed and travel-stained, the same whom I had seen by the side of Mary Underedge, at once entered the witness-box. 'I can explain this unfortunate matter, my lord,' said he, 'in a very few words. It is perfectly true that the note in question was paid by me upon my father's account to Richard Underedge; and that he entered its number, as well as those of several others, in his memorandum-book at the time. Upon his leaving the room, however—as he will remember to have done—for the purpose of getting a receipt-stamp, I substituted five sovereigns for that note, but omitted—very carelessly, I own—to mention that I had done so. The reason for the substitution was this: I owed Frederic Upton the exact sum in question; and as he happened to be from home on some business of his master which would detain him some days, and as I myself was starting for America the next morning, it was more convenient to leave him a five-pound note in an envelope, than the gold.'

'Then why did not the accused person at once explain from whom, and in what manner, he had received this note?' inquired the judge. 'What was the reason of your unfortunate and stubborn silence, Frederic Upton?'

But Frederic Upton had left the dock immediately after the verdict which set him free, nor in spite of the very energetic efforts of the ushers, did he again make his appearance in the court-house of Dimblebury.

Years after the above trial, this ex-foreman, being given to the fine arts, was enticed into an exhibition of paintings in Piccadilly, advertised as Scenes from the Far West. They were not good; but while I was investigating one of them rather narrowly, a hand was lightly laid upon my shoulder, and, behold, a charming young woman was courtesying to me in a very pleasant fashion, while a young man, upon whose arm she rested, was pulling at a piece of hair upon his forehead, in token of grateful amity.

'You are Mary Underedge, are you not, my good girl?' said I.

'No, sir; I am Mary Upton; and this is my husband, Frederic, who has so much to thank you for in the matter of that trial at Dimblebury. Mr Sunnyside told us—when we went to be photographed together—that, but for you, that dreadful Mr Crasket would have sent my dear Fred. to prison.'

'I am glad he did not,' said I. 'But do you know that your dear Fred. almost deserved to go for not revealing what he knew about that five-pound note. Why, on earth, did he not tell all about it?'

'Because, sir,' answered the young wife proudly, 'he had promised that he never would. Mr Francis Morris did not want to be brought up to be a lawyer like his father, but to be a painter instead, and he used to paint a great deal upon the sly. Whenever he finished a picture, he liked to have a pretty frame for it, and he employed my husband to carve it for him. "Only," said he, "never you mention that you do these things for me to any human being. If my father came to know of it at present, he would be exceedingly angry. Some day or another, when I shall have made a great success, it will be different, and he will be proud enough of his son the painter." And that is why my husband would not clear himself at the trial. It was very hard upon him, sir, was it not? But I will say Mr Francis has done all he can to make it up to us since. These are all pictures painted from sketches taken in that very tour of his in America.'

'Then your patron is famous now, and his father lets him follow his chosen calling, does he?'

'Well, sir, the fact is, Mr Morris the elder is dead.'

'Ah, then, the young man does as he likes, of course. But these paintings of his are very beautiful, Mrs Upton, are they not?'

'I dare say they may be, sir; I am sure I hope they are, for Mr Francis' sake; but oh, sir, did you ever see anything so lovely as my dear Frederic's frames?'

POSTSCRIPT.

It will scarcely be expected—notwithstanding what is expected of a British jurymen—that this ex-Foreman should narrate the histories of his eleven companions subsequent to their escape from the

Box at Dimblebury. Let it be imagined (with the exception, we will hope, of Crasket) that 'they all lived very happily afterwards,' which, by comparison with their existence in the jury-room, it is very probable they did. I am not in a position to say more, for, to tell the truth, we have rather shunned each other's company since the occasion in question. There are some who consider Solitary Confinement to be the severest of punishments; these have never tried the effect of Enforced Companionship. However, no man need ever be a jurymen again; the recipe for this exemption has just been confided to me by Mr Sunnyside; in the strictest confidence, it is true, but I shall do my duty to the public at all hazards. I print the gentleman's letter *in extenso*.

Private.

DEAR MR EX-FOREMAN—Knowing how deeply you feel upon the question of service in the jury-box, I write these few lines to let you know how it may be avoided for your whole lifetime. No sooner had I removed to town—where you will be glad to hear I am doing a very good business, principally in heads and shoulders [*vignettes*!—than I found myself summoned to serve upon an Old Bailey jury. This was bad enough of itself; but since Crasket now resides at his London establishment, there was just a possibility that I might meet him again, under similar circumstances. This, of course, was not to be endured. I therefore applied to Mr Forret, of Skinner Street, Snowhill—a locality singularly consonant with his character—for redress under this grievance.

'Don't want to serve this session, eh?' quoth this very sharp practitioner. 'Very natural, very right: then you shall not serve.'

'But I shall be fined twenty pounds,' said I, 'shall I not?'

'Twenty fiddle-sticks!' responded Ferret. 'Give me five pounds down, and I will engage that you shall never be called upon to serve again as long as you live.'

I instantly gave him the money.

As the time drew on for the sessions, however, I began to feel certain qualms of conscience; and becoming rather curious to see what measures would be taken for my exemption, I attended at the Old Bailey on the appointed day, concealing myself very completely, however, in a dark corner of the court. The names of the jurors were soon commenced with; and I experienced very unpleasant emotions, when 'Henry Sunnyside, Camera Villas, Kentish Town,' was called out in a very impressive voice, and a pause ensued. The call was repeated; and then a man who actually stood next to me, stepped forwards, and addressed the court. I thought he was about to denounce me, there and then, although, indeed, it turned out that he knew me no more than I knew him. He was a very respectable-looking person, in deep black, with the air of one who was suffering under some recent heavy affliction.

'Mr Sunnyside is unable to attend, sir,' observed he in a tone broken by emotion.

'Why not?' asked the official sharply. 'What is his excuse?'

'He is dead, sir,' responded my unknown friend with a half sob.

'Poor fellow. Scratch him out then,' was the humane reply.

The shock that this caused to me at the time, my dear ex-Foreman, was rather severe; but it will be nothing, of course, to one who knows what is coming. *Verbum aspi.*—Yours ever, HARRY SUNNYSIDE.

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